

Brno Architecture Manual
A Guide to 1946–1989 Architecture



A guide for readers of Brno Architecture Manual

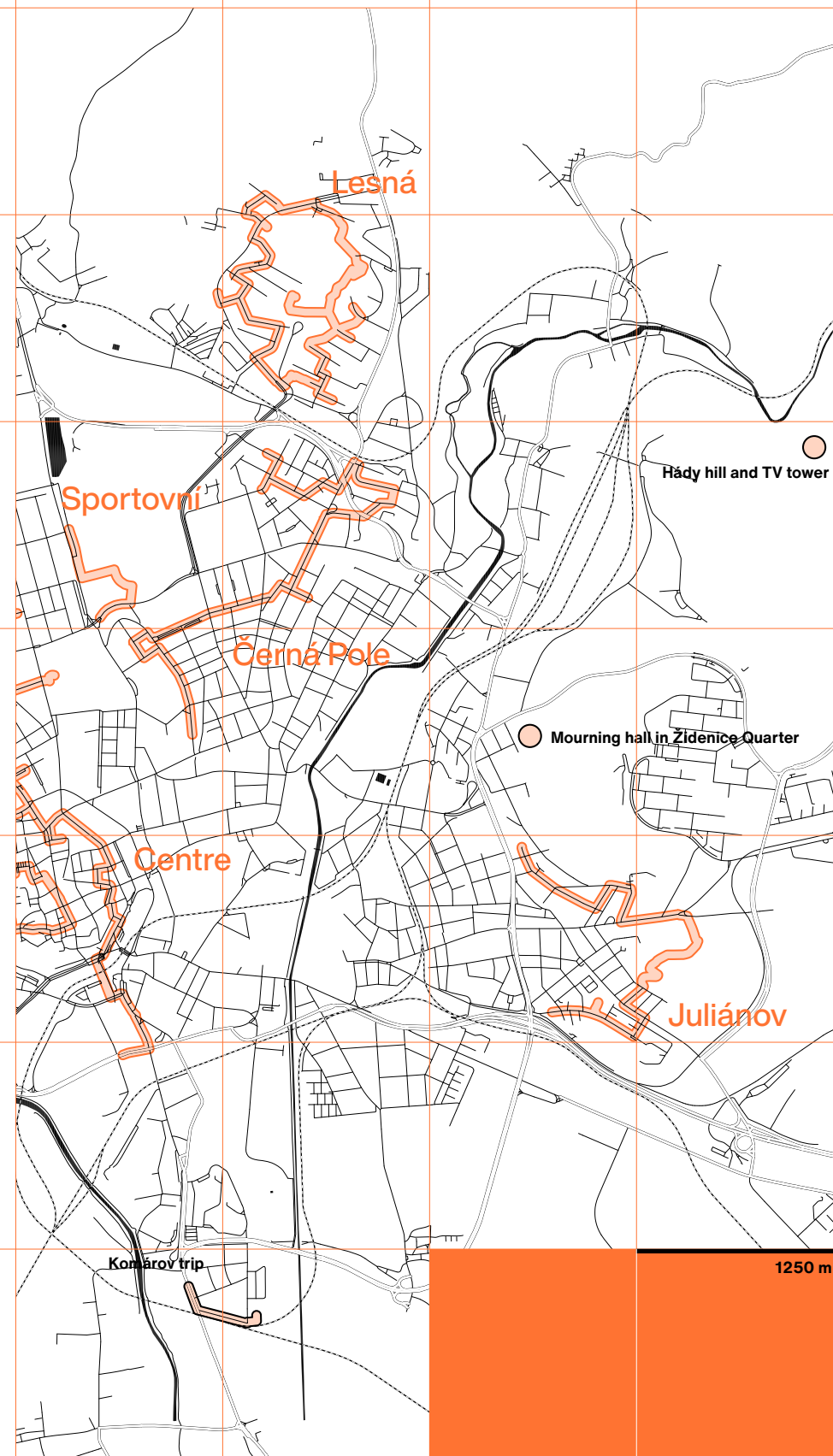
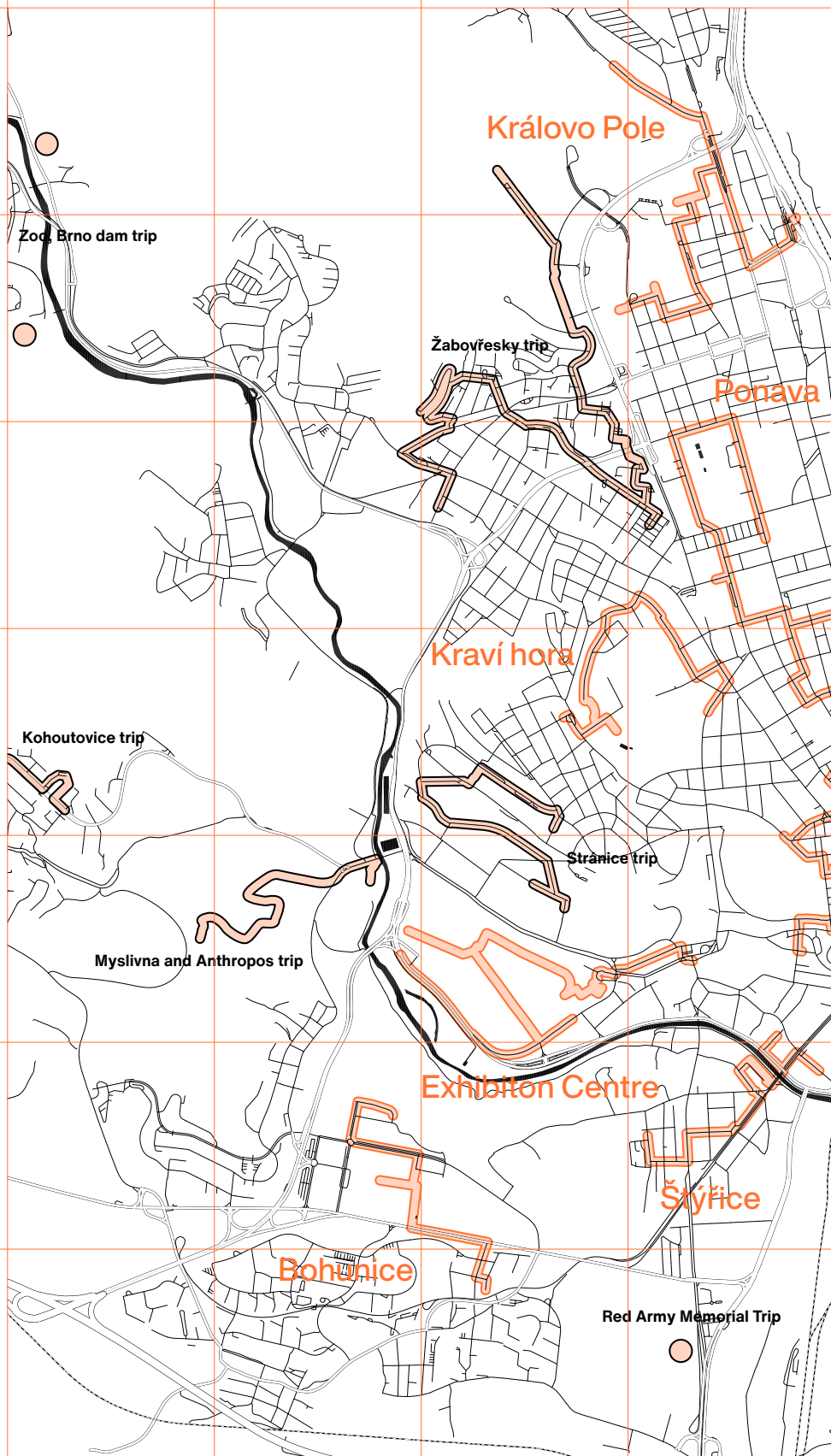
Brno Architecture Manual. A Guide to Architecture 1946–1989 is conceived as a topographic guide consisting of 250 objects of various types, including public buildings, housing estates with civic amenities, artworks, and individual family homes. These objects (along with period and up-to-date photographs) are incorporated into a series of eleven walking trails and nine short excursions to more distant sites. They are accompanied by short introductions, public transport information and the exact addresses of the objects. They take into account the availability and connections of the city's public transport system. The modern and historical maps help the user navigate and clearly show the urban development of the city.

The buildings selected illustrate the varied architectural morphology of this particular period. It encompasses the last gasp of functionalism during the two-year economic plan after the war, monumentalism, socialist realism after the communist coup of 1948, 'the Brussels style' associated with the Expo 58 World Fair, manifestations of the International Style of the 1960s, Brutalism or Sculpturalism, and also postmodern tendencies.

At the same time, the book addresses important architectural issues during the era of state socialism, including the wider social and political context. It deals with issues of standardized construction and urban planning, the combination of architecture and fine art and its conspicuous presence in the public space, the restructuring of architectural practice after the communist coup and the institutionalization of architecture and urban planning within the centrally managed economy, the Initiative Z projects, and the workings of the state design institutes. Attention is also paid to the current state of Brno's post-war architecture and to the crass and consummate renovations of the buildings and housing estates.

At the end of the book, there are short individual profiles of the architects who were active during this period. These are often the first biographical texts ever to be published in relation to the particular architect. The full texts are available on the BAM website, as are contemporary and (often hitherto unknown) period photographs and project documentation. The guide includes a typological index, an index of architects and an index of objects listed by numerical code, facilitating better navigation both within the publication and out on the streets of Brno. ○

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Machines and the city

When observing stars, we often remark that we are seeing them in the past, that is, with the time delay it has taken the light rays to fly from the stars to us. This is based on Einstein's definition of the present and can be loosely extended to how we observe the city and understand the way it has formed and the spatial determinateness that affects its functioning and other processes. What we are seeing when we observe the city is often rooted in decisions, events and processes that took place decades earlier. This is particularly true for Brno, which is an illustrative example of the dynamic transformation of a medieval fortified city into a rapidly developing modern city with all of the associated modern conveniences and ailments. The accelerating factor in the development of industrial Brno was the political and economic changes that alternated in quick succession, especially during the 20th century. The three features that determined the urban and architectural transformation of Brno in the second half of the 20th century are quite disparate: machines, trade fairs and housing.

The most influential of these features was, without doubt, *machines* or, more precisely, *industry*. It was the city-forming medium of modern Brno. This refers not only to the fact that in a very short period of time large numbers of people concentrated in a relatively small area to find work, but also to the fact that, initially, the development of primarily the textile industry required the regulation of watercourses, the construction of railway lines, and so on. It was industry that drove the accumulation of wealth in Brno and, thus, the increased influence of its citizens, who, following the example of Viennese liberals, exercised this newly acquired power in a radical reconstruction of the city, one which has significantly influenced the city's current appearance. Although the transformation of Brno was not a demonstration of the power of the state authorities, the building project was in accordance with the principles of constitutionalism and the cultural values of the middle class. As in Vienna, the focus of the reconstruction was the *Ringstrasse* [ring road], along which buildings associated with the newly asserted value system of liberalism gradually grew up, examples of which are Moravian Diet House (seat of the Moravian Diet), the Technical

High School (education), the Evangelical Church (religious tolerance), the Moravian Industrial Museum (enterprise), and the City Theatre (culture). The city of the 19th century was a polygon in which the confronting individual social strata of the population tested the modes of conduct and defined the values that form the basis of today's social order. In short, industrialism was not merely factories and smoking chimneys, it was the mode of organization and the functioning of the city.

This extensive transformation of Brno was based on the wool industry and the associated manufacture of machines. Even in the interwar period, this had not changed significantly, although engineering production played a greater role, due in part to the newly established state-owned company Československé závody, which manufactured armaments.

In Brno, this mode persisted into the second half of the 20th century, even though the political framework had changed fundamentally and the whole of industry was subordinated to the centrally planned economy. The largest companies in Brno, which were Mosilana, Vlněná, Královopolská strojírna, První brněnská strojírna, Šmeral, Zbrojovka and Zetor, employed two thirds of people working in industry in the mid-1960s and their operations had a significant impact on the life of the city. Their operations dictated the building of urban infrastructure, new settlements, civic amenities, kindergartens, schools, and the planning of public transport.

The operations of these large industrial concerns influenced the living experience of the city, as they set the rhythm of everyday life. In spite of its intangible character, this rhythm, i.e. masses of workers starting work at six in the morning and fleeing at two in the afternoon, was a defining experience in the perception of post-war industrial Brno. For many, this depressing daily routine was underscored by the wretchedness of the city's public space, which had lost the former elegance and style of the interwar period and had not received another face that its inhabitants were willing to identify with. This was due, on the one hand, to the underfunding of the central parts of the city, as the construction of large housing estates were prioritized in the 1970s and 1980s, and, on the other, to the fact that for those in power these unwelcoming,

desolate public spaces were more controllable and manageable, and the meanings and symbols on which the communist regime relied were more easily embedded in them.

The identity of the city

The rhythm of the city is intangible and ephemeral, but quite easy to perceive. Another intangible feature is *identity*, which, on the other hand, is a characteristic of the city that is more difficult to grasp. The identity of a city can be considered a mental setting shared by its inhabitants arising out of its successes and accumulated disappointments, and the resulting expectations or disillusionment. The basis of the urban structure of Brno is connected to the industrialization of the city in the second half of the 19th century. Thereafter, its identity springs from the great cultural upsurge that occurred in the interwar period, and which was nurtured by Brno's representatives in embracing the role of second most important city in the new Czechoslovak state. This importance was based on advanced industrial production, vibrant trade and Brno's position as the Moravian capital. The establishment of Masaryk University and the University of Agriculture, the relocation of the Supreme Court, and the creation of other offices with predominantly Moravian jurisdiction provided sufficient support for the intensive development of Brno, which was bustling with extraordinary construction activity and cultural events with a nationwide profile. One such event was the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia, which was held in 1928.

Even after the war, this mental setting of the city endured. However, before Brno's inhabitants were able to formulate their ambitions for their city, a series of momentous events occurred in quick succession, which undermined its chances of building on the foundations of its interwar prosperity. The first critical event was the expulsion of Brno's German-speaking residents. In the highly charged atmosphere after the defeat of the German armies and in the chaos of the war-ravaged city, a large group of Czech-speaking residents of Brno resorted to an unjustifiable act of revenge, whereby around twenty thousand of Brno's German inhabitants were forced from their homes and marched towards the Austrian border, an event known as the Brno death march. The expulsion of Brno's German-speaking citizens was a much more damaging blow to the city than the bombing raids carried out by Allied air forces during the war. With their departure Brno lost part of the genetic character that had shaped its social and cultural development.

Another event was the reorganization of the public administration, which diminished the importance of Brno. In January 1949, the system of lands was abolished and replaced with a system of regions. This expropriation of the public administration was mainly driven by the effort to acquire maximum control over affairs in the state and to introduce a mechanism that would enable the Communist Party to more efficiently exercise the power of the state. With this, Brno lost its sovereign position as capital of the lands of Moravia and Silesia and became just one of nineteen regional capitals.

Another setback was the change in priorities within the framework of the previously mentioned industrial restructuring, which transferred the primary focus to the Ostrava region. This favouring of Ostrava was associated with an effort to establish a sufficient base of production that would further Moscow's plans to arm the Czechoslovak army in order to prepare for the next world war. At the same time, the concentrated building activity in Ostrava served the communist regime, as it helped create the illusion of the ideal socialist city, which was to be a model for other cities to follow.

Therefore, Brno unexpectedly found itself on the periphery of interest, even though, in terms the city's material and human potential, it had the capacity to accomplish much more complex political and social tasks than simply deploying its industrial tradition in the service of socialist production as a comfortable regional capital. One such task had been the construction of the Brno Exhibition Centre and the experience of organizing the very successful Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in 1928.

From the exhibition to city planning

In 1958, the overall development plan of the city of Brno, which was developed under the supervision of the architect František Kočí, was presented in a special double issue of the magazine *Architektura ČSR*. The main points of this plan addressed Brno's older ailments and war damage, such as plugging the gaps caused by the bombing, tackling the still pressing housing shortage and reducing commuter traffic to Brno, moving industry from the central areas of the city to the south, and the issue of the relocation the main railway station. This was related to issues of long-distance transportation links, ring roads, and public transport within the city. Even in this respect, it was evident that the exhibition complex was becoming a new pole around which the city was beginning to be organized.

The trade fairs had the greatest impact on speeding up construction of the city facilities that provided the necessary infrastructure for them. Evidence of this new specialization of Brno came in the form of two hotels, which were meant to satisfy the city's shortage of accommodation and, at the same time, meet international quality standards. The first of these was the Hotel International, which was originally designed by the architect Vilém Kuba. However, he was forced to leave the organization responsible for the project, Stavoprojekt because of a negative cadre report and the hotel project was reassigned to Arnošt Krejza and Miloš Kramoliš.

The second hotel, the Hotel Continental, opened to the public two years later and had the same lofty ambitions, despite a much smaller budget. The original investment plan sought to address the insufficient hotel capacity of Brno by increasing to the maximum the number of beds planned for this 'tourist hostel' category building. However, while it was being built, when investors changed in quick succession, the categorization of the hotel also changed, which gradually brought it closer to the standards of the Hotel International. The Hotel Continental was overshadowed by the Hotel International's artworks and the extent and

parameters of its social facilities, yet the architectural quality of the Hotel Continental was so high that it became one of the five buildings that symbolized the new role of Brno, whose ranks also included the Hotel International. The other buildings were the outstanding new landmarks of the exhibition complex: Pavilion Z, Pavilion C, and the administrative building of the exhibition centre. All of these buildings bore a cultural orientation that was opposite to that of the officially favoured Soviet models and continued in the modern Czechoslovak and Brno traditions, restoring the link to a space which Czechoslovakia had never ceased to be part of, even during the Stalinization of the country. The architectural tone of the buildings was also encouraged by the success of the Czechoslovak exposition at the 1958 Brussels World Fair - Expo 58. This Brussels affinity was underlined by the relocation of the sculpture *Nový věk* [The New Age] by Vincent Makovský from Brussels to the entrance of Brno Exhibition Centre.

In its relation to this phenomenon, Brno was described by Rostislav Švácha as 'a centre of renewed modernity'. However, the catalogue of buildings in Brno that fit this description is much more extensive and here it is possible to include those that were constructed in the early 1950s, which, apart from expanding the range of amenities and cultural and leisure activities, maintained an architectural style that arose out of the city's interwar architectural tradition. One of these was the zoo, which was designed by the prominent First Republic architect Otto Eisler and opened to the public in 1953. The People's Observatory and Planetarium, which was designed by František Šotola also opened in the same year. However, the post-war situation in the construction industry and lack of funds forced a scaling back of the original plan, and thus, in 1953, it was only the observatory that opened. The planetarium was not realized until 1958, built to a design by Evžen Šteflíček.

Šteflíček also designed the Anthropos Pavilion, which was originally meant to be located in the exhibition complex as a follow-up exposition of the exhibition *Man and his Ancestry* by Jiří Kroha from 1928. However, as there were plans for the intensive use of the Brno Exhibition Centre, the pavilion was located near the Riviera recreation park by the river Svratka. Apart from being by same architect, another connection between the Anthropos Pavilion and the People's Observatory and Planetarium is the fact that both projects were built within the framework of what was known as 'Initiative Z'.

The extent of the resistance to socialist realism in architecture in Brno is also evidenced in the construction of Janáček Theatre, which, apart from endowing Brno with a modern theatre hall, crowned many years of effort by the Czech Theatre Association to build a dignified theatre stage. In 1956, a public architectural competition was announced, which was won by Jan Víšek and his collaborators Vilém Zavřel and Libuše Žáčková-Polednová. Víšek's design could have drawn on his successful competition designs from the pre-war period, but, in this case, he resorted to a conspicuously monumentalizing and historicizing form that sought to accommodate the precepts of socialist architecture. His concept withstood the test of an expert

jury in the second round of the competition and was just as successful in the internal Stavoprojekt company competition of 1958. Even so, in the end, the realization of the project was entrusted to Otakar Oplatek and Vilém Zavřel, who, according to Viktor Rudiš, were given the political task of moderating the, already by that time, disproportionate grandiosity of Víšek's design and meeting the deadline for the opening of the new theatre.

Among the buildings that changed the form and atmosphere of the city, there were some which came about as a result of changing lifestyles, not only the fact that Brno trade fairs would need to cater for increasing numbers of visitors. Notable examples of interior design that were influenced by the popularity of 'the Brussels style' were the milk bar on Nádražní street (formerly Tatranská) by Zdeněk Řihák and the Sputnik milk bar on Česká street by Jaroslav Brychta. The designers utilized not only characteristic elements such as Venetian mosaic tiling and suspended ceilings, but also new materials and new combinations of them.

Rhythms of a higher order – international Brno

Every year, the Brno trade fairs, and the International Engineering Fair in particular, would bestow on the city the exclusivity of place and time. Foreign visitors – above all, those from the West - filled up the hotels, their luxury cars encamped in the parking spaces around the exhibition grounds. In combination with the exhilarating atmosphere of the fair itself, it created a backdrop that outshone the mundane reality of the socialist city. It was a rhythm of a higher order, with its associations of exhibitions, marketing, and illuminated advertising. It was the neon tubes that hung in the streets of the city centre that came to be an integral part of the Brno trade fair, restoring some of the lost sparkle of the big city. As with the celebrated Brno Grand Prix, which at the time of the fairs was still called the *Závod družby národů* [Race of the Friendship of Nations], it had the power to transform the city and create the illusion that Brno bore the hallmark of an international metropolis. The races, which drew large crowds, were held on specially adapted roads between the suburbs of Bosonohy, Nový Lískovec, Pisárky and Kohoutovice. From 1965, the prestige of the Grand Prix was enhanced by its inclusion in the World Motorcycle Road Racing Championship. The importance of the sporting event and the increasing demands of the motorcycling federation eventually forced the construction of the motor-drome circuit in Kývalka, which opened in 1987.

Nevertheless, not even the carnival-like character of the motorcycle races and the showcase trade fair events could hide the fact that, compared to the mid-1960s, the city's spaces had significantly deteriorated by the 1980s. The bleak and depressing atmosphere of the city, as an embodiment of the general social undernourishment of enduring socialism, undoubtedly helped the Brno cultural scene flourish and contributed to the emergence of 'the Brno alternative'. The independent and frequently anti-regime activities of artists, architects and, in particular, musicians and theatre people (Večerní Brno, Husa na Provázku) created a social structure that was spontaneously, and even intentionally, visible, and thus became part of the city's structure.

The international dimension cultivated at the fairs and the Grand Prix was in the official spirit of peaceful association between the camp of socialist countries and the countries of the capitalist West and developing countries. However, the unofficial orientation of both of these events was primarily towards Austria, West Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Finland, the Benelux countries and the USA. In the area of manufacturing and trade, the official design models were taken from the Soviet Union, but the de facto focus of Czechoslovak manufacturers was towards the West. The reason for organizing international trade fairs in Brno was to help the development of Czechoslovak industry, but, at the same time, an equally important effect of these events was that they helped maintain a cultural connection to Europe. Against a background of business affairs, the Brno trade fairs gave participants a sense of cultural elevation and fulfillment, which became as valuable a commodity as the products on show. Political representatives of all levels willingly participated in this non-commercial exchange without having to feel they were guilty of transgressing some Soviet doctrine. At that time, Brno served as a gateway through which it was possible to briefly visit an otherwise forbidden cultural space without fear of punishment. Consequently, against the background of trade, Brno became the largest cultural site of pilgrimage in Czechoslovakia, where 'cultural recidivism' was possible, and which was also supported by political figures in the highest echelons.

The arena for this cultural recidivism extended beyond the exhibition grounds and took in the whole city. Therefore, to a considerable extent, architecture was allowed to take forms that differed from those permissible at the time. This was part of a tacit agreement between the political representation and those charged with implementing the grand project of the Brno Exhibition Centre, where, in architecture, it was possible to use forms referring to cosmopolitanism that had become completely unacceptable with the Stalinization of politics and culture. In its search for new role, and in competition with other cities in Czechoslovakia, Brno chose to create a socialist city in a variant that followed on from its previous urban development and which preserved its cultural tradition.

The depression of normalization

The building stimulus associated with the construction for Brno trade fairs waned after 1970, and there was an increasing emphasis on the construction of large residential complexes. Housing construction was moving from the central areas of the city to its outskirts. Although this change did not occur until the 1970s and 1980s, the authors of the above-mentioned 1958 overall development plan had discussed the idea of moving mass housing to the outskirts of Brno, as well as the possibility of rebuilding entire parts of the city by renovating the original buildings. This plan, however, could only be implemented after the development of a construction technology that would facilitate the maximum prefabrication of buildings and after there was sufficient manufacturing capacity to produce the required volumes of building components. The defining moment in the effort to maximize the number

of inhabitable flats in Brno was the commissioning of a new prefabricated panel manufacturing plant by the state company Prefa Brno in the suburb of Chrlice in 1973. This plant was named 'the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Plant', which was due, in part, to the fact that the manufacturing technologies used were brought from the Soviet Union and had the capacity to produce two thousand apartments a year. From the outset, it manufactured the complete range of components for the B70 construction system, which was specifically designed for Brno housing estates. The author of the construction system was František Zounek, whose design primarily focused on creating versatile and formable building components with which it would be possible to create varying configurations of apartments, which included the grading of their height, adapting buildings to the profile of the terrain and also designing individual buildings for a variety of complexes. Nevertheless, as we will see, the expectations that the architects of the Brno housing estates had with regard the new construction system did not fully materialize.

Let us recall the character of housing construction that preceded the large Brno housing estates from the 'Husák' period. Right after the war, housing construction was driven by the effort to quickly rectify the acute shortage of apartments and followed on from interwar initiatives to find optimal solutions for housing estates, as was the case with the 'two-year' apartment buildings on Tábor street (by Jiří Kroha, Josef Polášek and Vilém Kuba). Even after the communist coup of 1948, when, in a relatively short period of time, architectural studios were forced to work under state-controlled design institutes, the largest of which was Stavoprojekt, and construction industry was nationalized in the form of Czechoslovak construction companies, architects still attempted to follow on from the existing urban structure. Notable examples are the Úvoz housing estate (by Miloslav Kramoliš), the estate on Bakalovo nábreží (by Zdeněk Chlup and František Zounek), and the larger housing estates on sites within the city limits, such as the socialist realism style housing estate on Chládkova street (by Josef Luc, Vítězslav Unzeitig, and František Krejčí) and on Kounicova street (by Vilém Kuba and Vítězslav Unzeitig).

The first Brno housing estate constructed entirely from prefabricated panel components was the housing estate in Juliánov, which was built between 1959 and 1964. It was designed by a team of architects led by Pavel Krchňák, who was given a relatively large area of undeveloped land on what was then the outskirts of Brno. The original intention of using traditional brick masonry was abandoned in favour of testing the B60 construction system, which was a Brno variant of an earlier system known as G57. The clear urban layout of the housing estate was the result of a concept of 'urban districts', which were composed for approximately 2,300 people and accompanied by civic amenities and a primary school. A similar district concept, which included the attempt to define the central space of the housing estate, can be observed in another high-quality housing estate in Černá Pole, which was built in the period 1962–1968 to a design by Zdeněk Kříž.

The Lesná housing estate (by František Zounek and Viktor Rudiš in cooperation with Ladislav Volák and Miroslav Dufek) was truly groundbreaking, as it introduced residential units of a completely different scale to the Brno environment. For comparison, when construction started on the Lesná project, the Juliánov housing estate was nearly finished. This new estate had a built up area of approximately 20 hectares and a little over 1,300 new apartments. The urban plan of the Lesná housing estate covered an area of 150 hectares and was designed to provide 5,920 apartments for around 20,500 residents. Its extraordinary feat was that even with this multiplication of scale the quality of the proposed plan was maintained and it did not detract from orientation in the space of the housing estate. On the contrary, the spacious composition, which combined thirteen long prefabricated panel blocks of flats with free-standing buildings, made maximum use of the quality of the sloping terrain and the natural landscape of the immediate surroundings. The housing estate was divided into four districts and its amenities included a primary school, two nurseries, two kindergartens, a shopping centre with supermarket, a snack bar, a restaurant, a social and cultural centre and other services. Because of its location, Lesná was also the first housing estate that significantly changed the skyline of the city.

Both experts and commentators in the media acclaimed the Lesná project and held it up as an example of how to approach the building of large residential units without diluting urban and architectural requirements and reducing the quality and attractiveness of living on the housing estate. However, the testing of the architectural possibilities of prefabricated residential buildings and the exploring of optimal forms of residential structure that took place during the 1960s quickly vanished after the politicians began to place more emphasis on the absolute numbers of completed housing units. The ideas of architects and their designs for new housing estates began to be significantly influenced by the manufacturers of prefabricated components and construction companies, for whom any attempt to make buildings more special or individual meant manufacturing and construction complications. Another major problem at that time was that building contractors would leave the sites soon after the residential buildings had been completed, without finishing the roads and civic amenities for the housing estates. Thus, mounds of excavated soil, muddy pavements, and construction site fences became a characteristic feature of the housing estates of the 1970s and 1980s, which only added to their bleakness. The absence of shops and other civic amenities made it more difficult for the residents to embrace their new homes and housing estates gradually became unloved dormitories on the outskirts of cities.

An notorious example of the change in the priorities of housing developments during the normalization period is the building of the Bohunice and Starý Lískovec housing estates (built in the period 1972–1986), which were designed by a team of architects led by Pavel Krchňák, who had fashioned the form of Brno's first prefabricated panel housing estate in Juliánov just a decade earlier.

The Bohunice housing estate would become one of the largest in Brno (for around 30,000 residents) and was the first to test the possibilities of the new B70 construction system. However, the true potential of this system was not utilized in the composition of apartment layouts and building forms or in the creation of urban configurations. This was, above all, due to the fact that the building plans took into account the requirements of the building contractor, who clearly went against the intentions of the architects. Despite the possibilities of the construction system that was used, the architectural design of the housing estate is very dull and the urban configuration lacks any obvious logic or intention. Therefore, it is not surprising that the general opinion of it is very critical to this day. As one commentator noted, it is 'grim evidence of the absolute dictate of socialist industrial construction and the accomplishment of an almost Orwellian vision of the residential environment. The result is an unambiguous sense of hopelessness and alienation.'

The Bohunice and Starý Lískovec housing estates created a 'concrete bulwark' in the south-western part of the city. Other housing estates followed closely on their heels, extending further the city's outskirts. These were Kamenný vrch in Nový Lískovec (to a design by František Kočí, and Miroslav Kolofík), Kohoutovice (by František Kočí, Jaroslav Černý, Jaromír Kurfürst, and Jan Rubáš), Bystrc (by Zdeněk Michal), and, on the eastern edge of the city, Líšeň (by Viktor Rudiš, František Zounek, Vladimír Palla, and Aleš Jenček) and Vinohrady (by Jan Doležal, Miroslav Dufek, Aleš Jenček, and Pavel Plšek). This long list of large housing estates is testimony to the dramatic changes in the urban structure and views and experiences of the city which took place with the rapid growth of prefabricated panel housing estates. The expansion of these estates to the outskirts of Brno was a kind of crude and unrelenting urbanization of the outer edges of the city. Addressing all of their shortcomings such as transport accessibility, lack of civic amenities and the structural and technical defects of the buildings themselves would be a task for the following decades.

Undercurrents of urbanism

Looking back on the development of Brno in the second half of the 20th century, it can be seen that the most powerful shaping influence on the city continued to be industry, or more aptly, industrialism. At the same time, the complex political events that Czechoslovakia underwent during this period, like the whole of Europe, show that the process of change in the city has also been influenced by the city's hard to define and collectively experienced identity, quite apart from objectively observable features such as the transformation of industrial production and the shortage of housing. In the years 1955–1965, the post-war transformation of Brno accelerated noticeably and some architecturally outstanding buildings were constructed in this period. The impetus for this acceleration was the preparations for and organization of international trade fairs. It is therefore possible to draw a close parallel between these post-war fairs and the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in 1928, which also

raised the distinctive profile of Brno as a modern city whose standards of culture and architecture could stand comparison with the rest of Europe. Thirty years after the exhibition, Brno had not lost its ambition in this respect.

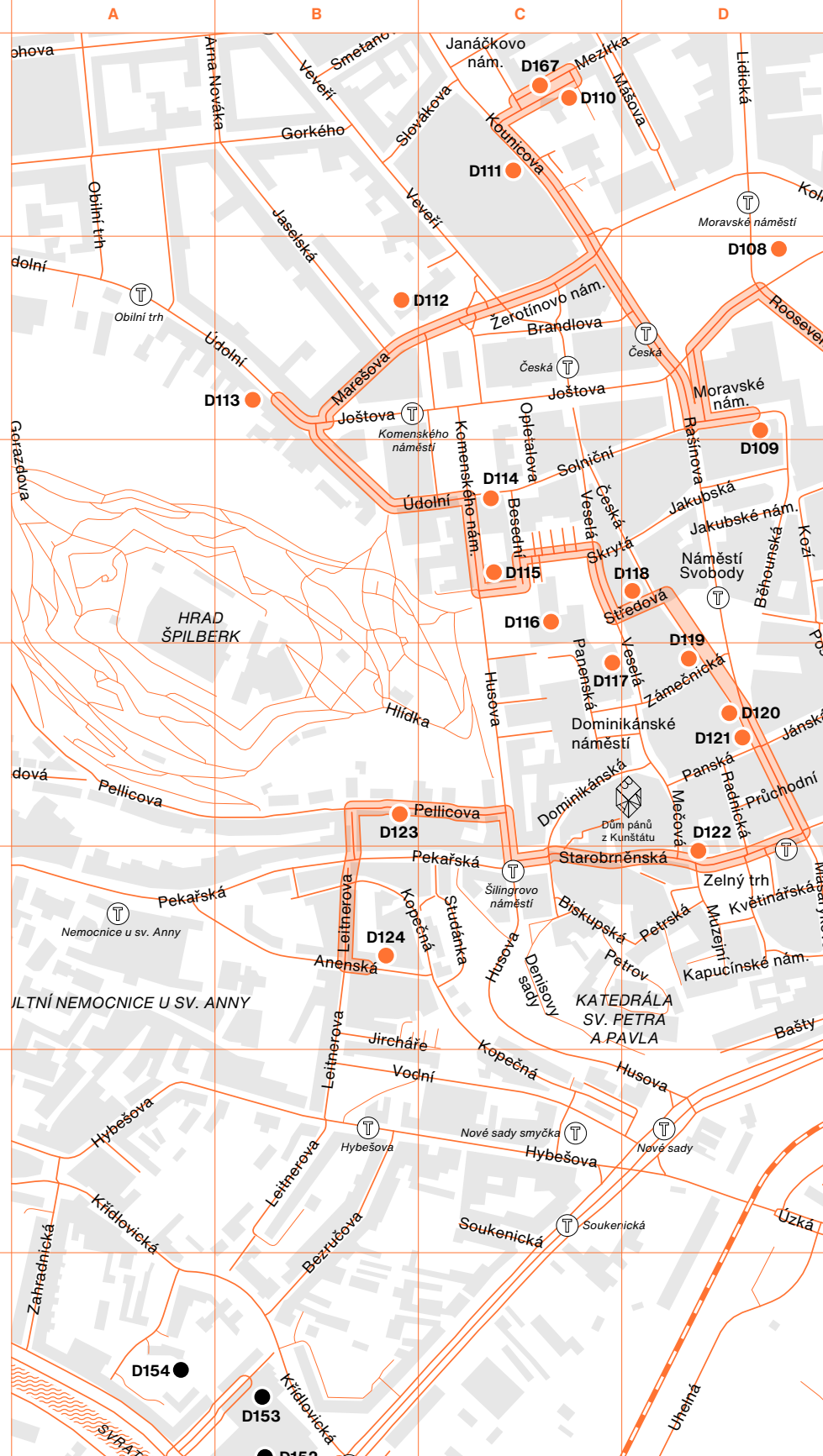
The fact that Brno's identity was significantly shaped by the interwar period can also be witnessed in the post-war period. To varying extents, there were a number of regularly occurring urban planning themes that had already been formulated between the wars. Some of the more resonant of these ideas included relocating the railway station, increasing the capacity of the city centre by building a 'southern centre', relocating industrial production from the city centre to the south, and building a university campus. Such themes remained part of the city's political rhetoric and on the agenda of architects and planners regardless of the ideological background of its political leaders. Nevertheless, paradoxically, some of these long-term plans associated with the industrial history of Brno only started coming to fruition when industry in its historical form was in decline. The deindustrialization of the central part of Brno was only accomplished after the change in the political and economic situation after 1989, which forced some large companies to cease production, such as the Zbrojovka, Vlněná, and Škrobárny enterprises, while others significantly reduced their output and vacated parts of their plants, such as *Zetor*, which closed its foundry in the Vaňkovka area. These are the plants that Bohuslav Fuchs certainly had in mind when elaborating his ideas on the post-war reconstruction of Brno, as he wanted to eliminate the negative effects of industrial production by moving manufacturing companies to the area of Horní and Dolní Heršpice. Such change only came about with the aid of investor incentives that shifted industry in a more sophisticatedly conceptualized form to what is known as the Černovice terrace. Along with the recently built shopping centres in Dolní Heršpice and the university campus in Bohunice, it is a symbol of the most dramatic transformation of the city since the demolition of the city ramparts and the creation of Greater Brno.

Rostislav Koryčánek





Centre



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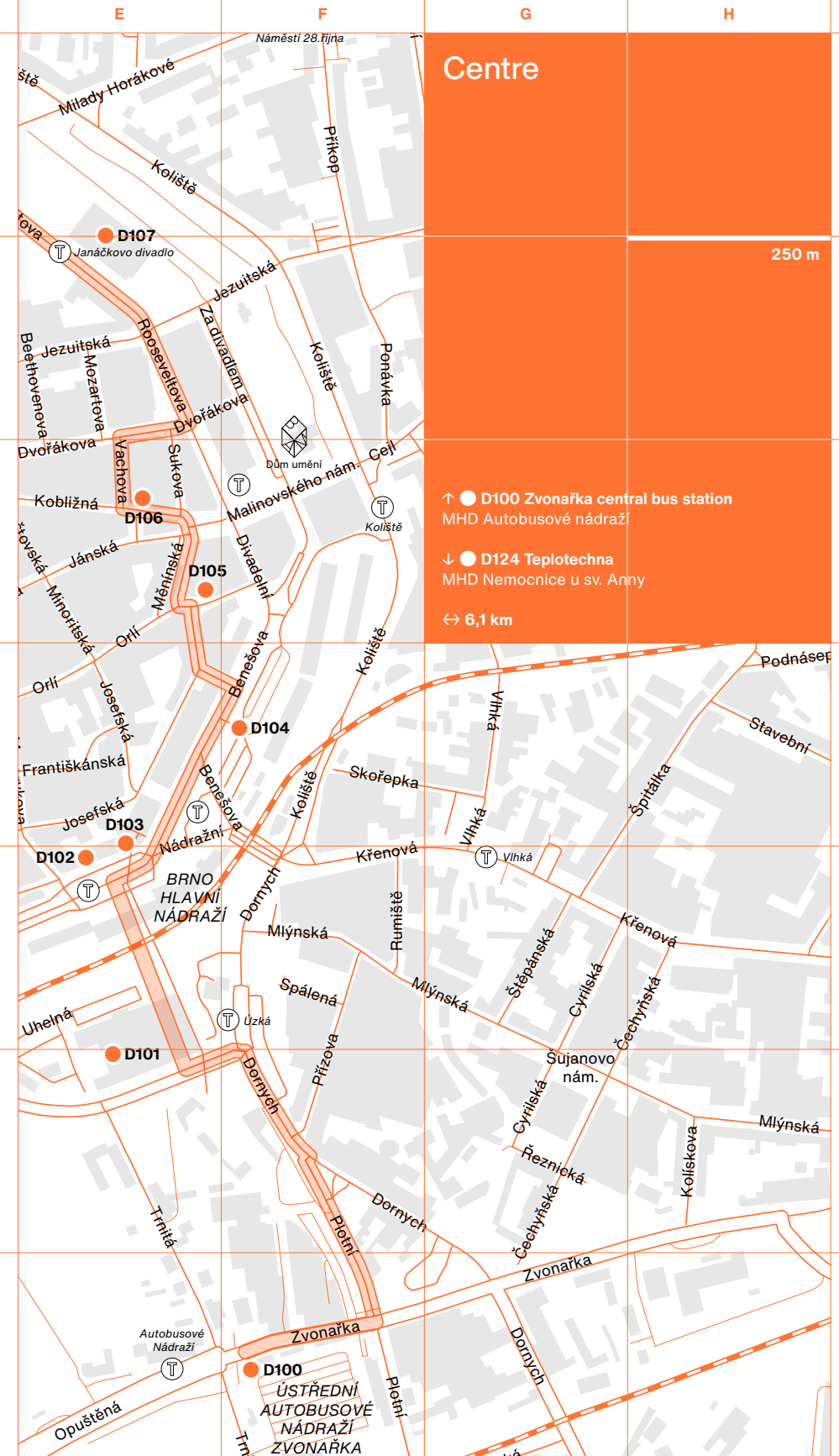
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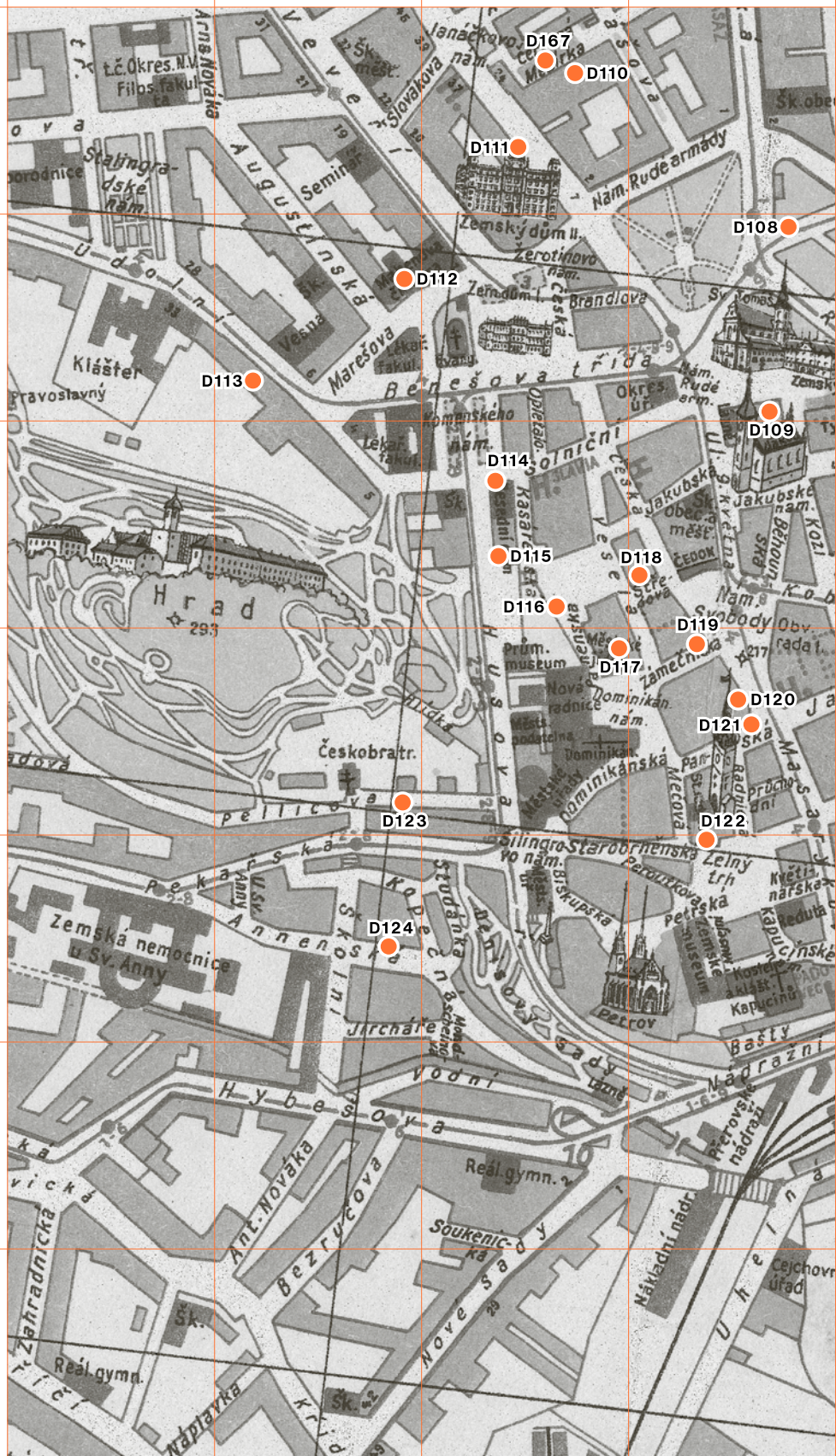
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Centre

250 m

- ↑ ● D100 Zvonarka central bus station
MHD Autobusové nádraží
- ↓ ● D124 Teplotechna
MHD Nemocnice u sv. Anny
- ↔ 6,1 km





This post-war trail through the centre of Brno begins at the Brutalist-style Zvonařka bus station, which is in a locality that for many years has been earmarked as the new transport hub for the city when the main railway station is relocated. The trail leads around what remains of the former Friedrich Wannieck factory building and the adjoining shopping mall towards the post-war building of the Prior department store, which is connected to the historical city centre by an underpass under the railway station. This ‘mouse hole’ leads us to another of Zdeněk Řihák’s designs - the ‘Brussels-style’ interior of the former milk bar on Nádražní street. Further along the trail we encounter the most architecturally significant post-war buildings on the city’s ring road and in the city centre. Among these building are the National Theatre, the hotels Continental and International, which in their day were the most luxurious of Brno’s hotels, the former headquarters of the Communist Party known as ‘the white house’, and the municipal market hall. The trail also takes in several reconstructions of historical palaces. The city centre part of the trail largely leads us past department stores and the interiors of bars and bistros that helped create the post-war atmosphere of Brno.

If the final object on the Centre Trail, i.e., the Teplotechna building by Jan Dvořák, happens to pique your interest, take tram No. 12 to the final stop in Komárov and have a look at two of Jan Dvořák’s landmark buildings in the southern part of Brno - the Research Institute for Anti-friction Bearings and the India Hall of Residence. Alternatively, head for the nearby square Mendlovo náměstí, where the Exhibition Centre Trail begins.



● D100
Zvonařka central bus station, 1977–1985, 2017–2019, Radúz Russ, Chybík + Křištof
→ F7 Zvonařka, Brno-střed (Trnitá)

The Zvonařka central bus station building was one of a series of efforts to create adequate facilities for public bus transport in Brno. From Bohuslav Fuchs’s design for a functionalist bus station on Benešová street (opposite the Grand Hotel), only one covered platform was built, between the years 1948 and 1949. The insufficient passenger capacity of this incomplete project led, in the late 1960s, to the construction of an unsheltered bus station on Uhelná street (the site on which the Prior department store was later built).

The eventual location of the bus station on Zvonařka street is related to deliberations on moving the main railway station to Rosická street (Dolní nádraží) and the new urban concept arising from the Brno Regional Centre Project from the late 1960s that was drawn up by architects Ivan Ruller and Zdeněk Řihák. In the 1970s, according to this plan, there was a massive clearance of the devastated area behind the railway station. However, from the original design, only the Prior department store (1980–1984) was eventually built in a modified form to a design by Zdeněk Řihák and Zdeněk Sklepek, which was accessible from the city centre via an underpass and connected to the newly built central bus station on Zvonařka by an elevated walkway.

The central bus station was built between 1977 and 1985 in three phases. The first phase entailed the building of uncovered platforms, a departure building, and footbridges across the streets Plotní and Úzká (1977–1978). In the second phase, an interim space with uncovered platforms was established on Opuštěná street (which is today a parking area). Finally, in the years 1981–1985, the roofing for the platforms with adjoining passenger facilities was built to a Brutalist design by Radúz Russ. In the end, the associated plan for the construction of a high-rise building for the transport operator never materialized.

The central part consists of a metal truss structure which supports a concrete panel bordered by a monumental parapet of reinforced prefabricated concrete segments. This shelters the platforms beneath and, at the same time, serves as a parking area for up to 90 buses, which is accessible by means of a ramp from the south. In the north, there are three ground-floor buildings housing kiosks that separate the station from the main road. Situated between them is a sculpture on a high pedestal entitled Křídla [Wings] by the sculptor Sylva Lacinová (copper, 1982–1983). The complex is closed in by two matching style multi-storey buildings housing facilities for passengers. On the eastern side is the passenger building with a restaurant and accommodation on the first floor, while the western building houses shops. After the the OC Galerie Vaňkovka shopping mall was built in 2005 (to a design by architects Hruša & Pelcák), the bus station was served by another elevated walkway along Zvonařka street.

The Brutalist style building has retained both its original character and purpose. However, maintenance to the metal structure, concrete elements and platform features was inadequate and necessitated a contemporary renovation of the bus station and the area around it. The reconstruction began in 2019 to a design by the architects Ondřej Chybík and Michal Křištof from 2017. The renovation project preserves high architectural value of the structure and modernizes it by means of comprehensive colour unification and distinctive lighting of the sheltered area. It respects both the original parking area for buses and the area of platforms, although they will take on a more contemporary appearance. The removal of the original adjoining buildings and the building of a new passenger hall in the northern sector will change the overall layout of the station and give it a grand façade with main entrance on Zvonařka street (opposite the Vaňkovka shopping mall). The modernization of Zvonařka central bus station was scheduled to have been completed by the end of 2020. ○



D101

**Prior department store,
1974–1984, Zdeněk Řihák,
Zdeněk Sklepek,
Jan Melichar → E6
Dornych 404/4, Brno-střed (Trnitá)**

In the mid-1960s, the Brno architects Ivan Ruller and Zdeněk Řihák began working on a possible design for a 'new Brno centre' under the auspices of the Department of the Chief Municipal Architect and the State Design Institute for Trade in Brno. It was seen as a potential substitute for the historical centre of the city, which was no longer adequate for the modern needs of business and was increasingly congested with traffic. In collaboration with Milan Záhorský, Stanislav Prokeš and Jan Říha, the architects drew up plans to extend the existing city

centre southwards and for a new urban structure that was to grow up on the site of the former freight railway station in front of the Grand Hotel and across the railway lines towards the former Friedrich Wannick factory (which is now Vaňkovka shopping mall).

In the late 1960s, the Department of the Chief Architect of Brno and the State Design Institute for Trade in Brno were granted permission to realize this bold vision for the new part of the city. However, after the arrival of occupying troops in 1968, the plans to build a twenty-two storey building for commerce and other services and two Prior department stores were shelved. Nevertheless, Zdeněk Řihák and his younger colleague Zdeněk Sklepek did manage to succeed in extending the centre to the south. They elaborated a more modest variant of the previous design, from which only the Prior department store eventually materialized. The building was situated near the main railway station and the choice of site was purely utilitarian. Moving the station away from the city centre had been discussed for a long time and urban planning competitions had been organized to this effect. When the Prior department store was finally built, it created an obstacle that prevented long sets of railway carriages from lining up on the curved track. Thus, this gave the city council a utilitarian reason to move the station to the south at some future point in time. In 1974, Řihák's Studio 01 of the State Design Institute for Trade (SPÚO) in Brno created the design for the building, which was forecast to cost 270 million crowns. Construction did not begin until 1980, and on 30 November 1984 (just in time for Christmas), the new Prior department store was officially opened.

In the 1970s, there was a growing need to build a new Prior department store, as the retail spaces of that time were no longer adequate for the modern needs of companies. The department store was designed to allow for the concentration as wide a range of goods as possible in one place, to provide a clear layout with the option to vary the interior space for promotions, and also to facilitate the strict separation of public and internal operations. This architecturally very progressive building was enhanced by its accessibility to shoppers by car. Pedestrians coming from the city centre were easily able to reach the department store via an underpass running under the railway station (by the architect Otakar Maděra), the budget for which was 164 million crowns.

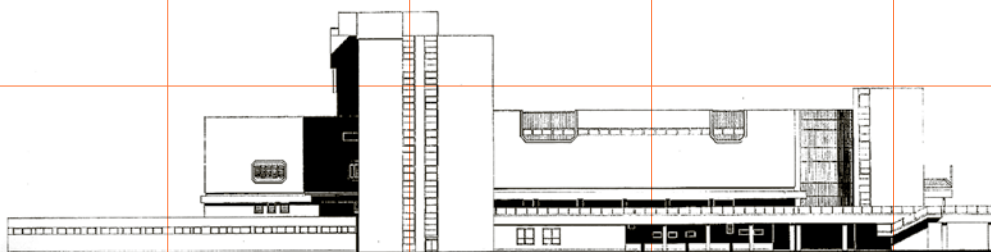
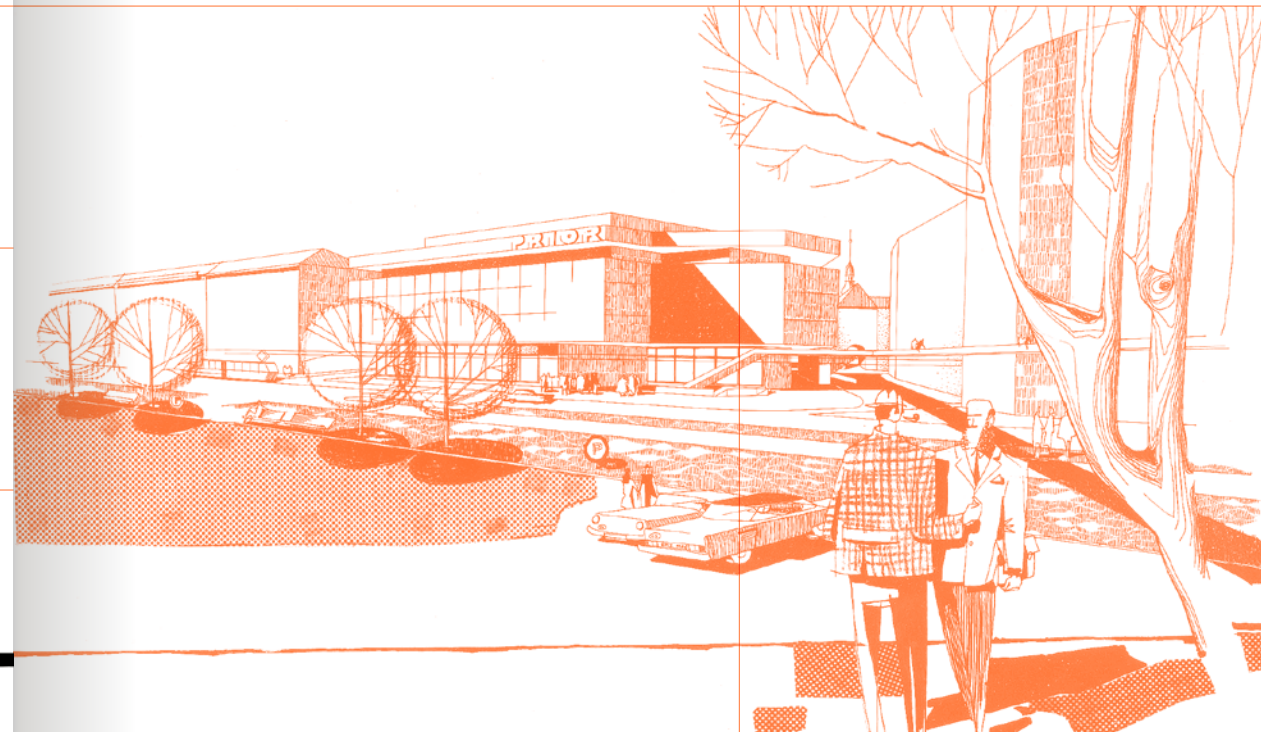
The Brutalist style building was originally meant to have a large subterranean floor of 5,957 m², but the building plot, which was on a filled in section of a conduit of the river Svatka, thwarted this intention due to the presence of groundwater. The structure of the building is made from



cast-in-situ concrete in two types of modules, with dimensions of 9 × 9 m and 9 × 6 m and consists of a flat waffle slab cantilevered around the perimeter. The flush column heads are mounted on columns, i.e., 'rocking columns'. The structural height of the floors is 480 cm and 520 cm. In terms of its type, the Prior building corresponds to the contemporary need for an extensive retail area, which is approximately 15,000 m². This area is supplemented by another 10,000 m² of warehouse space that was built in Brno-Horní Heršpice at the same time as the Prior department store. The ground floor was the designated part of the building for receiving and handling of supplies and also housed a supermarket and other spaces covering an area of 1,163 m². The location of the store allows for an easy flow of supplies from the yard area and does not obstruct customers entering from the street. The first, second and third floors were originally intended for

various retail operations. The first floor had a total area of 6,550 m² and was also accessible to visitors via a wide terrace connected to escalators leading from the railway underpass. Since it was built, the terrace has been modified and a footbridge has been added connecting it to the new Vaňkovka shopping mall.

On the third floor, there was originally a restaurant and canteen for employees and workshop apprentices. The building is visually separated at the level of the fourth floor, consisting of concrete cells delineated by wide chamfered U-shapes in the corners, where Zdeněk Řihák situated offices and operations rooms. The sculptural texture of the upper floors form ○





● D103

Administrative building of Vítkovice Steel and Iron Works (building no longer exists), 1982–1990, Alena Šrámková, Jaromír Kurfürst, Jiří Suchomel → E4 Nádražní 681/2, Josefská 700/17, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

The new administrative building for the Vítkovice Steel and Iron Works was built on a long-vacant space on the southern edge of the ring road, directly opposite the main railway station, which was the result of the bombing of Brno during the war. A design for the Brno headquarters of the Ostrava-based steel works had already been drawn up in the early 1920s by the architect Ernst Wiesner, who at that time envisaged a city palace in classicist style with lots of historicist details. This project was eventually bought and then built by the Moravian Regional Life Insurance Company. The steel company's office facilities in Brno were not built until several decades later. The design, from 1982, was done by a trio of architects: Jaromír Kurfürst, Jiří Suchomel and Alena Šrámková. However, the building was not completed until the early 1990s, after the fall of communism, when it was privatized and used

as a retail space and casino. Jiří Suchomel, who was working for the Liberec studio Stavoprojekt SIAL, and the Prague architect Professor Alena Šrámková were, at that time, among the most progressive exponents of Czechoslovak architecture, which is evident from the design of the administration building for Vítkovice Steel and Iron Works, especially in its solution for the southern facade. The nine-storey steel structure was distinguished by its double-glazed facade, angled in middle of the window line, creating a corner in the shape of a wide-open letter V. The square windows with traditional cross-shaped muntins created a regular geometrical grid on the facade that was combined with vertical and horizontal perforated strips. The five upper office floors thus seemed extraordinarily light and transparent and had excellent interior illumination. In addition to providing offices for the staff of the steel company and another firm, Chepos, it was necessary for the building to allow smooth passage from the city centre on Josefská street to Nádražní street, which was a floor lower and came out onto a main transport hub by the railway station. The architects therefore designed the lowest two floors as a partly subterranean covered passageway through a shopping arcade connected by escalators to an underground subway. At the same time, they used contrasting reinforced

concrete elements on the facade, namely, a strip encircling the frontage and large cylindrical supports in the open area of the lower floors.

This outstanding example of 1980s architecture displaying features of the high-tech trends of that time was, unfortunately, severely damaged in a tragic fire in 2002. In the following decade, only the exposed steel torso of the building remained, although it continued to serve as a thoroughfare in that busy part of the city. After many complicated years of negotiations and disputes over the politics and ownership of the site, the plot was appropriated for a new commercial building called Letmo, based on a design by Tomáš Dvořák, Martin Klimecký and David Fišer. The building finally opened in 2013 but, unfortunately, does not live up to the standards of the former building. The tragic fire and the lives two firemen who died fighting it are commemorated in the foyer of the building by a monument by the sculptor Adam Krhánek. ○



● **D105**
Operations building of the Karat cooperative, 1972–1976, Ivan Ruller → E3 Orlí 542/27, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

With the construction of the building for the Karat production cooperative, which was completed in 1976, the architect Ivan Ruller made a significant symbolic entrance into the historical centre of Brno. Up until the 1970s, the cooperative, which had been an association of goldsmiths and jewellers since 1945, operated in several different locations scattered around Brno. In 1971, they decided to build a new building that would concentrate all the cooperative's activities, i.e. sales, production and administration, in one place in the city centre. The project was elaborated by Ivan Ruller, who was at that time working in the Department of Chief Municipal Architect. Due to his political disposition, he was also working under pedagogical and publication restrictions during the period of normalization. For the vacant trapezoid plot on the corner of the streets Orlí and Novobranská, close to the medieval Měnin Gate and the functionalist police headquarters designed by Jaroslav Grunt and Jiří Šálek (C111), he designed a six-storey building with underground garages. The massing arrangement and architectural details were a response to the ground plan, the surrounding terrain and its urban context.

The facade onto Novobranská street smoothly followed the street line of the adjacent historical palaces while retaining a slightly withdrawn ground floor for businesses, featuring a sculpture by Zdeněk Macháček. The other side of the Karat building, facing Orlí street, was much more structured and segmented. Ruller situated the main entrance outside the main body of the building in the form of a monumental covered stairway illuminated from above by a curved glass roof. A 3-metre circular sculpture from wrought copper by the artists Jánuš Kubiček (member of the creative group *Brno 57*) and Josef Vohrabal penetrated the sculpted light plaster wall of the stairway. This formed the artistic decoration for both the exterior and interior of the covered entrance, from where it offered partial views of the street through the apertures in the sculpture. The south-west facing facade of the Karat building, with its jewellery production facilities and offices on the upper floors, diverges on Orlí Street and splits into two visually distinct variants. As with the northern façade, the part connected to the



D105

apartment building on the corner of Divadelní street is dominated by alternating strips of rectangular two-part windows with under sill areas of corrugated orange sheet metal and is clad with brick tiles along the sides. In contrast, both in colour and material, the part above the main entrance and garage is patterned by the protruding ribs of sun breakers and the perforated shading of the windows. As with his other projects, Ivan Ruller was both careful and courageous in his choice of artists to adorn the building with art works. The interior of the goldsmiths' cooperative building featured a sculpture by Vladimír Preclík, a sculptor who the communist authorities disapproved of and who, in the 1990s, became the Dean of the newly founded Faculty of Fine Arts in Brno.

The building served as the base for the Karat jewellery co-operative's operations and administration until shortly after the Velvet Revolution (although manufacturing activity was moved to premises on Palackého street earlier). After changes to the property laws, the building was sold in 2003, turned into shops and offices, and adapted for the use of other private companies. Its architectural form has been very well preserved despite subsequent modifications, such as the replacement of the under-sill corrugated metal in the area of sun breakers with ceramic tiles of a different shade and the installation of new windows. The building is still a fine example of 1970s architecture and, though contemporary in its expression, design and detail, it is respectful of its predominantly historical setting. ○

● **D106**
Vichr department store, 1946, Norbert Troller → E3 Koblížná 47/19, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

The young Konrád Vichr opened his first ironmonger's shop on Koblížná street in 1908. The business grew quickly and the founder soon became owner of the entire premises. In the 1930s, he extended his retail space to two floors. In seeking a modern design, he approached the architect Norbert Troller, who was famous for his designs for retail spaces. For the ground floor, Troller designed rounded shop windows in chrome frames bordered by a black socle. The Vichr company name shone out in neon above them on a wide band of opaque black glass. The glazed band also hid the original facade of the building's first floor, which was also used for displaying goods.

However, during the liberation of Brno at the end of World War II, the whole building was destroyed by fire. In 1946, Konrád Vichr decided to build a new commercial and office building, and again commissioned the architect of Jewish descent Norbert Troller, who had returned from Auschwitz concentration camp only a few months earlier. The eight-storey building with a rounded corner has two lower floors of retail space and six upper floors with offices, the topmost of which is set back on a terrace behind the line of the street. The lower two floors of the retail space extend the length of the neighbouring building on Vachova street into the courtyard space. This corner building with its distinctive horizontally segmented façade continues in Brno's pre-war functionalist tradition. The architect's design for the first and second above-ground floors refers back to his pre-war design of the original premises. The rounded shop windows in chrome frames follow the contours of the store with its two entrances on Koblížná street and come to a halt at the supply entrance on Vachova street. The floor above the smoothly plastered band with the name of the company (reminiscent of the original opaque glass band) is formed by a strip of windows accentuated by a distinctive cornice. The five floors of the office space are formed by bands of masonry frames with simple set back windows. Following the pre-war nautical aesthetic, the architect wanted to create the impression of continuous windows on all floors.



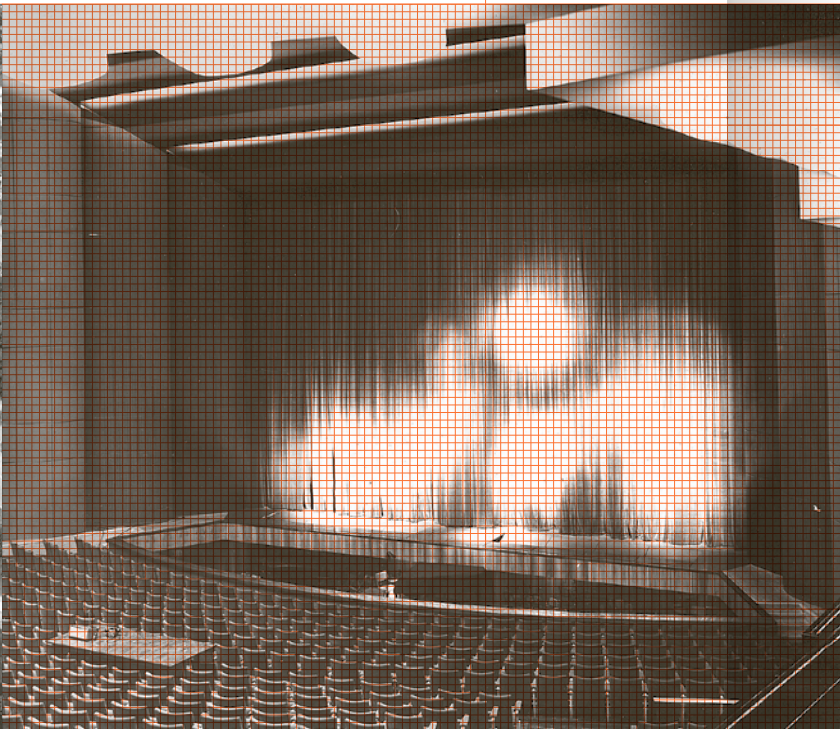
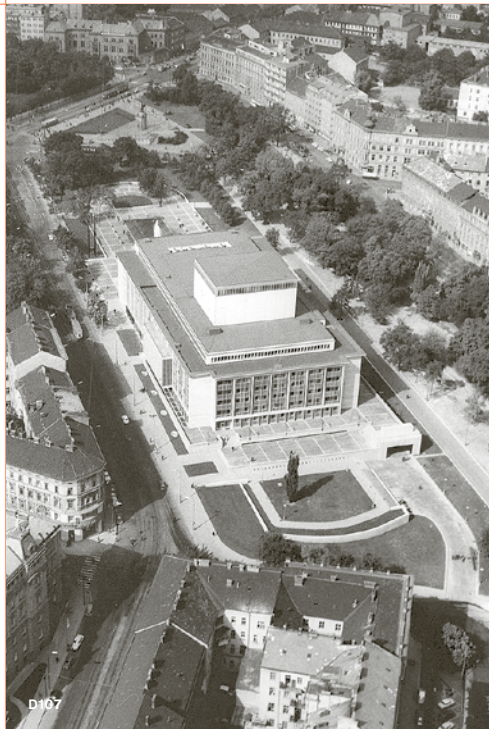
D106

● **D107**
Janáček Theatre, 1960–1965, Otakar Oplátek, Boleslav Písařík, Ivan Ruller, Jan Víšek, Vilém Zavřel, Libuše Žáčková-Pokorová → E2 Rooseveltova 31/7, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

Konrád Vichr only had a few months to enjoy his new modern premises, before the whole building was confiscated after the communist coup of 1948. In that year, Norbert Troller emigrated to the USA and the Vichr department store remained his only post-war design built in Czechoslovakia. During the communist period, the building housed a shop that sold household goods, which was still known as 'Vichr's' among its customers. After the Velvet Revolution, when the building was returned to Konrád Vichr's descendants in restitution, the traditional name and line of business of the Vichr department store was renewed. The building was reconstructed in the early 1990s and is still run as a family business today. ○

In the search for a design and location, the quest for a new Brno theatre lasted more than half a century. The Association for the Establishment of a Czech National Theatre in Brno was established in 1881, in response to the beginning of the construction of the German City Theatre (today's Mahen Theatre). For the home of the Czech theatre, the association first purchased a building on the corner of Josefov street and today's Žerotínovo náměstí, but this soon proved to be unsatisfactory and it was decided that more stately building would be built in its place. The new design would be chosen from a public competition, which was announced in 1910. A whole host of Czech architects entered the competition, among whom were Alois Dryák, Theodor Macharáček, Emil Králík, Otakar Novotný, Josef Gočár, Vlastislav Hofman, Josef Chochola and Pavel Janák. Although the most progressive designs came from the above-mentioned architects, who were inspired by Cubism and Modernism, the conservative jury nevertheless leaned towards the historicist design of Josef Mařík and Karel Šidlík. This result provoked a wave of resentment among the participating architects and although the association announced a new competition in 1913, many architects refused to take part. The First World War put an end to the planned construction of the theatre and the subject was not revived until the mid-1930s. No winner emerged from the competition that was announced in 1936, although number of avant-garde architects took part, including Bohuslav Fuchs (who concluded that the site was not suitable for a theatre from an urban planning perspective) and Jan Víšek, whose design came third and who would eventually go on to shape the final form of the theatre. Víšek participated again in the subsequent competition and was awarded the project for a new functionalist theatre building. He finalized the project execution





plans in 1944, but the end of the war prevented their implementation. In 1956, a fifth competition was announced. On this occasion, the classicizing design of Jan Víšek, Vilém Zavřel and Libuše Žáčková-Pokorová prevailed. However, this project only received final approval after an internal competition of Stavoprojekt in 1958, where a special studio was founded, headed by an architect of the interwar generation, Otakar Oplatek. His team included the co-authors of the design Vilém Zavřel and Libuše Žáčková-Pokorová, who would work together on the design of the interiors for the theatre hall. Jan Víšek was invited to consult as an external advisor, but soon ended his participation. One of the newcomers to the studio was Boleslav Písařík. He was entrusted with the design of the operational parts of the theatre, which contained all the necessary technical and utility spaces, such as the costume rooms and painter's workshop. The other newcomer was Ivan Ruller, who was responsible for the interiors of the social areas of the theatre, which are today considered to be its most architecturally significant features. Construction began in January 1960 and the official opening of the Janáček Theatre took place on 2 October 1965. The opening performance was none other than Leoš Janáček's opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

The building consists of a reinforced concrete skeleton frame and a steel structure that supports the aluminium window frames, which lighten the monumental classicizing expression of this grand stone-clad building. On the main facade are balconies with parapets of wrought copper sheet by Eva Kmentová and Olbram Zoubek. A stone sculpture of a Moravian eagle, also by Zoubek, ornaments the interior by the main staircase. The project also encompassed the design of the public space in front of the theatre, with its paving and water features, and also the space around the theatre, where a number of artworks were positioned. A sculpture of Alois and Vilém Mrštík, designed by Vincenc Makovský and fashioned by Stanislav Hanzl was situated above the entrance to the technical area and a bronze memorial to Leoš Janáček by Stanislav Hanzl was installed in 1975. The interior is also adorned with a tapestry with a motif of *The Cunning Little Vixen* by Alois Fišárek, a bust of Leoš Janáček by Miloš Axmann, a glass landing by the side stairs by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, and a ceramic relief by Ida Vaculková and Vladislav Vaculka above the entrance to the club of artists.

In the years 2007–2013, the theatre building was renovated. The auditorium was reconstructed and the whole area in front of the theatre was revitalized. Underground garages were constructed and the original piazzetta was re-paved and ornamented with water jets and a light fountain which creates various water patterns. The design for the renovation was drawn up by the architect Jaroslav Černý from Atelier A3. ○

● **D108**
Red Army memorial,
1949–1955, Bohuslav
Fuchs, Antonín Kurial,
Vincenc Makovský → D2
Moravské náměstí, Brno-střed
(Brno-město)

The Red Army memorial or 'Memorial to the Red Army's Victory over Fascism' has stood on the eastern side of the square known today as Moravské náměstí since 1955, when it was ceremonially unveiled on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the country's liberation from fascist occupation. The triangle of land hemmed in by the tram lines along the roads Lidická and Milady Horákové forms a link between the adjacent Koliště park and the western side of Moravské náměstí, originally the site of the German House, which was demolished soon after the end of the war in 1945. This whole area, where the old city walls once stood, was transformed into a circular grand boulevard with a ring of parks

at the end of the 19th century. The preparations for the public monument space with memorial crowned by a heroic bronze statue of a soldier was the work of three people: the sculptor Vincenc Makovský, who had returned to Brno after the war; the architect Bohuslav Fuchs, who was at that time dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Construction Engineering; and Antonín Kurial, a professor of architecture at the faculty, who, several years earlier, in 1946, had designed a memorial in the Brno district of Nový Lískovec to the victims of the Second World War. The monument is set in Bohuslav Fuchs's architecturally designed space arranged in the shape of the letter V, rounded at the tip. The wings of the V, which are the two main axes of approach, point towards the western side of Moravské náměstí. The memorial is bounded by a system of open, geometrically shaped balustrades combined with low granite walls, which vary in height according to the terrain. Several bollards line the edge along Lidická street. The stone bases for public lighting pylons, the monumental decorative vases for flames in the corners, the open lawn area, and the traditional, robust and enduring materials all contribute to the space's distinctive ceremonial character.

The plinth of the monument, which was designed by Antonín Kurial, stands at the centre of the triangle on a low pedestal of three steps in the form of a rusticated block that is horizontally divided by several cornices. Vertical lines are created by a narrower raised block of white stone forming a central column, upon which Stalin's military order to liberate Brno was carved, crowned with a relief wreath containing a hammer and sickle. The realistically depicted bronze sculpture of a Red Army soldier with a raised left arm and a right arm holding a ceremonial standard is turned towards the square and symbolizes the decisive gesture silencing the guns of war.

Since 1958, the memorial has been designated an immovable cultural monument. It originated in the early 1950s, which was the harshest period of communist rule, a time when socialist realism was the officially prescribed and the predominant form of art. The monument was used extensively for official occasions and ceremonies of the regime in the post-war years. Because of this, in the post-communist era, it became a symbol of despised totalitarianism and its possible removal was the subject of much discussion. It has undergone a number of subsequent modifications, the most notable of which was the removal of the inscription of Stalin's order from the white stone. The sculpture was taken down in 2013 for restoration and later returned to its place. ○



● **D109**
Administrative building with Cinema
Scala (formerly Moscow), 1962–1965,
Lubomír Lacina → D2 Moravské náměstí
127/3, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

In the years 1926–1927, the Cooperative of Employees of Commerce and Industry (DOPZ) built its headquarters on the square Moravské náměstí. The design is usually attributed to either to Zikmund Kerekes, a architect of Jewish descent who settled in Brno, or to the Prague architects Otto and Karl Kohn. In addition to offices on the upper floors, this multi-purpose administrative and social building also housed a ballroom, which was used for balls, theatre events and lectures, especially by the left-wing Brno intelligentsia led by the Left Front organization, centred around the literary scholar Bedřich Václavěk. From 1928, the first and second floors of the DOPZ Palace were home to the famous Café Biber. In December 1929, the Bio DOPZ cinema opened in the basement of the building, boasting the largest auditorium in Brno, for 800 viewers, and the best technical equipment. In its early years, the cinema was very successful and, in the years 1931–1932, the auditorium was enlarged to accommodate 1,012 viewers, the foyer was converted into a waiting room, and a smoking lounge was also created. In 1935, for marketing reasons, the name of the cinema was changed to Scala. At the beginning of the Second World War the cinema mainly screened newsreels and then closed with the arrival of the front in 1942. At the end of the war, the whole street front in that part of Moravské náměstí was destroyed by fire including the DOPZ Palace. However, the cinema in the basement survived the fire and operated almost without interruption from that time, later renamed Moscow under the communist regime.

At the beginning of the 1950s, a magnificent three-storey neoclassical administrative complex of buildings with the design offices of Hutní projekt [Metallurgical Design] was built on the site of the destroyed DOPZ palace. It was designed by the Brno architect Lubomír Lacina and is one of only a few buildings in the very centre of the city in socialist realism style. The middle part of the facade, which projects out from the side wings of the complex in a shallow avant-corps, is adorned with a tall stone portico and dark roughcast plaster decorated between the windows with figural relief plaques with motifs of workers and the intelligence of the working class (mining, construction, chemistry, engineering, automotive industry). The right wing of the complex is also decorated with a stone socle and relief decoration above the windows (some of which have been transformed into shop entrances) depicting agricultural and industrial tools or weapons. Above the cinema entrance is a massive rectangular stone portal with an iron plaque with the emblem of Hutní projekt, and there are also two female figures fashioned in iron, one with a child, the other holding a sheaf of wheat in her arms. The authors of the sculptural decoration were the architect's sister Sylva Lacinová and Jiří Marek. In the central part of the complex the Cinema Moscow continued screening and was converted to widescreen in 1957. The number of seats in the auditorium was also reduced from 1,012 to 750 (550 on the ground floor, 200 in the gallery) and the ticket offices were also moved from under the stairs to the vestibule. Another reconstruction of the interiors commenced in January 1971 to a design by the architect Jaroslav Šmídek, during which the cinema was modernized to facilitate the projection of 70 mm films. The ticket offices were relocated opposite the entrance

staircase and the smoking lounge was converted into a snack bar. The seats in the auditorium were also replaced and their number was reduced to 473 (328 on the ground floor, 145 in the gallery). After the Velvet Revolution, the cinema went back to its original name of Scala and was operated by the municipality. The cinema's interiors retain their original 1970's character, and, with the advent of multiplexes, it was threatened with closure. In the end, it was closed for two years. In 2013, Masaryk University took over the running of the cinema from the city. The university now operates the first university cinema in the country and its students help decide on the programme. In addition to film screenings, including premieres, it is also a venue for lectures and opening ceremonies. The complex of buildings is still well preserved (apart from the alterations to the shop fronts), and, today, this socialist realism style building is a cultural monument. ○

● D167

Administrative building of the Czechoslovak Brickworks and Industrial Buildings, 1967–1968, Štefan Hatala → C1 Mezírka 775/1, Brno-střed (Veveří)

● D110

Hotel Continental, 1961–1964, Vladimír Kovářik, Zdeněk Řihák, Alois Semela → C1 Kounicova 680/6, Brno-střed (Veveří)

The Hotel Continental was built for a similar reason as the Hotel International, i.e., to increase the capacity to accommodate visitors to the Brno trade fairs. However, the Hotel Continental was originally intended to be a tourist hostel. Nevertheless, during the construction of the building, a requirement for an increased level of comfort and a primary focus on foreign guests arose, which resulted in a certain mismatch: while the standard of accommodation was eventually raised to the required level (the hotel was classified as category B with a star with the option to become category A), the operational and business parts of the hotel remained true to the original concept and were not adequate for the needs of the facility. The relatively small plot chosen for the Hotel Continental is the former site of one of the oldest workers' quarters in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. A memorial plaque at the entrance to the hotel commemorates some of its history. It reads: *Here once stood the birthplace of Adolf Loos and the stonemason's workshop of his parents.* The small size of the plot determined the eventual form of the building, which had to be built upwards for reasons of capacity. This gave rise to a 56-metre high building of fifteen floors, which had a significant impact on the skyline of the city it is now an integral part of. The floor plan of the main building is in the shape of a letter Y, which was a popular design at the time, used in a range of variants. The structure of the high-rise block with the hotel rooms consists of cast concrete with prefabricated elements resting on cast-in-situ reinforced concrete frames at the level of the ground and first floors, which house the social amenities. The entrance hall in the

west wing, which occupies both of the lower floors, is dominated by a distinctive 'Brussels style' spiral staircase and an atypical ceiling design in a geometric configuration of concentric triangles, among which are concealed the original lighting fixtures of the same shape, and which are the key motif of the hotel. On the ground floor there is a hall, a bar and other common areas with plate glass walls. The originally single-storey extension for the restaurant, with folded plate roof, is connected to the south wing of the main high-rise block. The glazed facade of the ground floor facing Kounicova street opens onto an area of greenery, which was meant to be a Japanese garden with water features in the original plan. In spite of their relatively intimate dimensions, the social areas are quite spectacularly rendered in natural materials. The floors in the entrance hall are from Venetian tile, which contrasts with the rubble masonry wall behind the spiral staircase. Other materials are marble, transparent and coloured glass, and pear wood. The spaces in the interior and the exterior, i.e., the walls of the loggias and the ceilings of the balconies and pergolas, were rendered in 'Brussels style' in blue and other vivid shades. As with the Hotel International, the artistic design of both the interiors and the exteriors was entrusted to some outstanding artists. Kateřina Pažoutová describes the circumstances surrounding their cooperation with the team of architects Řihák, Semela and Kovářik: 'According to Zoubek, the initiating role was played by the architect [Ivan] Ruller, who had seen an exhibition of the art group Trasa and then wrote to its members and invited them to cooperate. The director of the Hotel Continental, formerly director of the restaurant in the Czechoslovak pavilion for Expo 58 in Brussels, welcomed art that could stand international comparison.' Of the members of the Trasa art group, it was eventually Olbram Zoubek, Eva Kmentová and Čestmír Kafka who participated in the artistic design of the Hotel Continental. They were also joined by Stanislav Libenský, Jaroslava Brychtová, Zdena Precílková-Fibichová and Otakar Sivera. The architect František Kovářik, a colleague of Řihák, also collaborated on the artistic concept for the interiors. On the ground floor, in front of the main entrance to the hotel on Kounicova street, there is an eleven-metre-high non-figurative sculpture by Olbram Zoubek entitled Ptáci [Birds] (1964), which is made from cast concrete and covered with white cement finish plaster. Near the sculpture was a small pebble mosaic pool by Eva Kmentová, which, however, has not survived due to inadequate maintenance. In the atrium of the northern façade, an irregular shaped water feature with a travertine statue of a female figure by Zdena Precílková-Fibichová has survived to this day. Glass sculptures and stained glass windows created at the Železný Brod Glass Art School were placed in the social areas of the hotel. In cooperation with Jaroslava Brychtová and J. Novotný, Stanislav Libenský contributed to the artistic decoration of the interior of the hotel hall (the fountain Květ [A flower], coloured compositions of glass and metal, and stained glass windows in the snack bar). The Železný Brod Glass Art School also created a glass map of Brno to a design by František Kovářik. The expressively perforated walls of the dining room complemented by abstract steel reliefs by Čestmír Kafka have remained intact. The ceramic decoration of the halls was designed by Otakar Sivera. All the guest rooms were adorned with original paintings by Moravian artists. As with the administrative building of Brno Exhibition Centre and the Hotel International, the Hotel Continental received its fair share of criticism. The critics above all highlighted the number of artistic features, the unusual combinations of materials and the disparateness of forms. However, from today's perspective, the Hotel Continental can be described as an impressive example of architecture combining elements of the International Style with 'the Brussels style', thus reflecting the time in which it was created, when architects in the Eastern Bloc were finally able to build on Brno's important pre-war architectural heritage in addition to contemporary developments behind the Iron Curtain. In 2011, the Hotel Continental built an extension for a club and lounges and increased the capacity of the underground garage. The hotel has preserved many valuable details of the interior and exterior and its current management promotes these features in its marketing. ○



State Design Institute for Trade (SPÚO) in Brno

The State Design Institute for Trade (SPÚO) in Brno was founded by the architect Jaromír Sirotek by hiving off selected studios from Potravínoprojekt in 1960. In this way, he established a centre that specialized in the design of hotels, department stores, warehouses, silos, cooling plants, canteens and coffee roasting plants. These were designed not only for Czechoslovakia, but also for other countries, such as for Libya, Syria and Egypt. Jaromír Sirotek was head of SPÚO until the beginning of the 1970s, when he was forced to leave for political reasons and was replaced by Zdeněk Jiříčka.

Apart from the main facility in Brno, SPÚO had a branch in Prague-Karlín, led by V. Bouček, and one in Bratislava headed by the architect I. Matušík. In 1970, the institute had 304 employees, 32% of whom were architects and engineers with a university degree. All the centres provided comprehensive designs for building projects, including the technology, specialized professionals and economic plans. The institute also had other specialist departments such as a department for hydrogeological surveying, a department for land surveying, and departments for modelling and planography.

The Brno branch of SPÚO had three main studios, where architects worked in groups. Studio 01 was led by the architect Zdeněk Řihák, who designed, for example, the hotels Panorama and Patrie in Štrbské Pleso (Slovakia), the hotels Horizont and Labská bouda in the Krkonoše Mountains, and the Hotel Continental in Brno. Almost all of the interiors for his buildings were designed by Vladimír Kovařík. Studio 02 was usually led by Jaroslav Hlavsa or Alois Semela, who was the architect of the Hotel Panorama in Vyšehrad in Prague. The chief architect in Studio 03 was usually Jiří Novák or Stanislav Kubík. They specialized in prefabricated buildings, as did the smaller studio 011, where Jitka Pacáková worked, designer of the hotels Flora in Olomouc and Máj in Ústí nad Labem. Studios 01, 02, and 03, SPÚO's main design centres in Brno, were located on the streets Palackého, Příční and Kobližná, until the main building on Příkop street by architect Jan Doležal was built in the mid-1970s. Among the other architects who worked for SPÚO Brno were Růžena Žertová, who designed the Prior department store in Ústí nad Labem, and Jan Melichar, who created the designs for the Prior department store in Olomouc and the renovation of the Prior department store in Brno. ○

● **D111**
Dopravoprojekt Brno, 1966–1969,
Jaroslav Ryška → C1
Kounicova 271/13, Brno-střed
(Veveří)

Alongside the Hotel Continental, another example of exceptionally high-quality post-war modernism is the nearby administrative building of the project institute Dopravoprojekt Brno, which was built in the years 1966–1969 and was located on the northern edge of the city centre on Kounicova street. The architectural design of this seven-storey building, which was to provide office facilities for an organization dedicated to the design of transport and technical constructions, was prepared by Jaroslav Ryška. A decade earlier, from 1951 to 1957, he was head of Stavoprojekt Brno, and later focused on solutions to the problem of residential housing, participating in the design of the housing estates in Černá Pole and Bohunice.

The main headquarters of Dopravoprojekt grew up on a vacant site for redevelopment, on which burgher houses once stood. The building is seamlessly connected to the line of an important city street. As with the surrounding interwar apartment buildings, it is divided between the traditional shop-front ground floor and the remaining floors, which house apartments or, as in this case, office space. One such residential building nearby, from 1938, was designed by Jan Víšek and was owned by the Kolbaba family [C276]. It had a patisserie and bakery on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors.

The Dopravoprojekt building has a fully glazed ground floor with shops and is set back from the street. At both ends of the building are passages that lead to the courtyard. Round columns with black cladding support the office floor above, creating a narrow sheltered arcade. The administrative floors are dominated by the suspended wall of the facade with its blue painted glass strips under the windows, which contrast with the black cladding of the same type on the ground floor of the Kolbaba patisserie. The horizontal character of the building, as determined by the long rectangular plot it occupies, is further accentuated by the longitudinal lines of glazed window strips composed of the two-part windows and the shiny contrasting painted glass. In addition, the street facade is strikingly segmented by regular, subtle half-columns that reveal the reinforced concrete structure of the building.

In the 1970s, a floor was added to the roof, set back from the street facade. Apart from the post-communist era modifications to the ground floor and office interiors, and the profusion of visual smog in the form of excessive advertising, the building has been preserved almost intact and is still the home of the project institute. It is a well-preserved example of the architecture of the mid-sixties, and with its lightness, its high-quality materials and, in particular, its painted decorative glass, it bears the hallmarks of 'the Brussels style'. ○



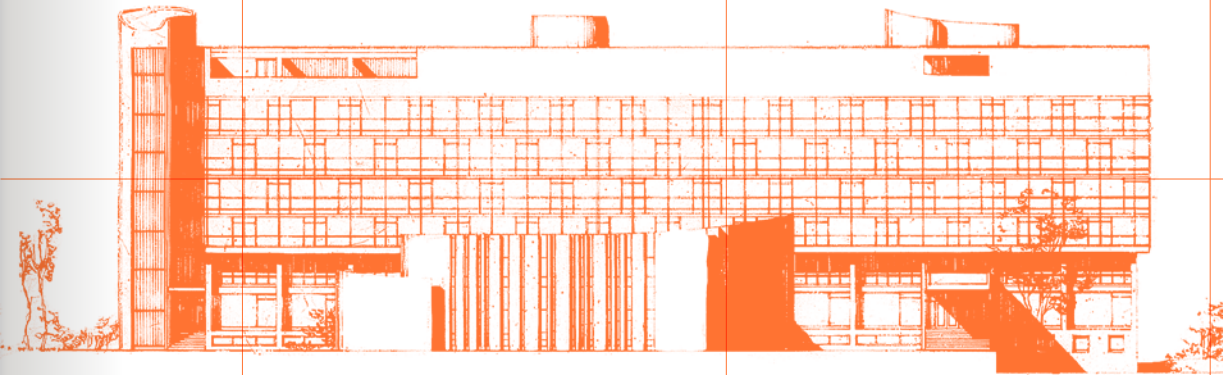
D111

● **D112**
The administrative building of
the Municipal Committee of the
Communist Party in Brno,
1974–1976, Miroslav Spurný,
František Jakubec, Jiří Kučera
→ B2 Žerotínovo náměstí 533/6,
Brno-střed (Veverí)

The administrative building of the Municipal Committee of the Communist Party, which is nowadays often referred to as 'the white house', is one of the most significant examples of modernist architecture in Brno and has been preserved in good, original condition. This eight-storey building on the north-western side of the square Žerotínovo náměstí was built in the years 1974–1976 according to a design by the architects Miroslav Spurný and František Jakubec. It was built to serve as the headquarters and offices of representatives of the Communist Party. Because of its socio-political function, the building is often viewed negatively in the public mind, in spite of the fact that it is an extraordinary example of 1970s architecture.

Moreover, it was also a creative response to contemporary architectural trends happening abroad, particularly the post-war work of Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer. Miroslav Spurný, a student of the functionalist architects Bohuslav Fuchs and Bedřich Rozehnal, worked for many decades for Stavoprojekt Brno and specialized in the typology of hospital facilities. Together with Jakubec, he created an office building for the Communist Party in the form of a high-rise block with a suspended prefabricated facade, which complements the elevational axis of the neighbouring streets and, at the same time, forms a substantial counterbalance to the neighbouring historicist palaces from the beginning of the 20th century and the neo-Gothic church of John Amos Comenius. The seat of the local Communist Party was built on a plot vacated by a provisional Czech theatre building. The building had at one time been a pub that was known as U Marovský. The theatre had occupied it from the 1880s until the mid-1950s, when it was demolished because of its poor technical condition. At that time, after almost half a century of searching for an architectural design for a new theatre building, it was decided that the new Janáček Theatre would be built on Koliště street. The light, almost fully glazed wall of the façade of the former communist committee offices extends across the administrative floors, its window panes of various shapes and sizes are set in subtle aluminium frames and its brown-hued glass impressively reflects the surroundings. The ground and first floors are slightly set back in comparison to the self-supporting glazed facade and accentuated by square pillars at regular intervals. A natural substructure for the building is created by green vegetation skirting the basement. The main entrance to the building is highlighted by a long, protruding steel awning that serves as a roof to cover the steps and as a balcony for the floor above. The architects Spurný and Jakubec cleverly combined the purity of line of the main office area and the open terrace on the roof, together with the three-dimensionality and sculptural qualities of other functional elements. The staircases were embedded in two monumental cylindrical towers which project out from the main building on its south-western and north-eastern edges. Light enters the towers through a continuous

D112



vertical strip of curved windows. The lecture and conference hall for nearly 300 people is situated in a bent three-storey tube facing Žerotínovo náměstí. Along its entire length, the smooth stone cladding is interrupted by irregular rhythms of long narrow windows. Many high-quality materials were used in the construction of the Communist Party's headquarters. The elevated entrance hall with its open balcony gallery and many of the corridors were lined with mahogany, large expanses of the exterior facades are covered with fine light ceramic tiles, and the interiors of the staircases are decorated with blue textured tiles and delicate glass balustrades.

After the revolution of 1989, the administrative building was used for a new purpose. It was transformed into a health centre and the former offices of Communist Party officials became the surgeries of paediatricians. In the post-communist years 'the white house' has also served as home to a vocational school for nurses and, more recently, a café, and has been a popular venue for cultural events. The statue of Klement Gottwald by František Navrátil, which was installed in the early 1980s in front of the main entrance of the building, was removed and replaced with the sculpture Mime by Jiří Marek from 1986, commemorating the theatrical heritage of the site. Despite its undeniable architectural and historical value, the former building of the Municipal Committee of the Communist Party is not listed, as with most other post-war buildings in the country. This means it faces an uncertain future and could be demolished or completely and carelessly renovated relatively easily. This building, situated in an attractive location on the edge of the historical city centre, has been the subject of many years of debate. ○

● **D113**
Bytové domy družstva
Agroprojekt, 1953–1955, Vladimír Beneš → B2 Údolní 503/21, 23, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

● **D114**
Reconstruction of Besední dům, 1987, Jindřich Kaněk, Jiří Mikšík → C3 Komenského náměstí 534/8, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

During the 1980s, when plans were being made to declare Brno city centre an urban conservation area, there was a focus on restoring some of the long-neglected historical monuments in the city centre in order to create a dignified representation of its cultural institutions. The Neo-Renaissance Besední dům, which was characterized by the rustication of its entire façade and its monumental decorative parapet with balustrade and sculptural decoration, was built in the years 1870–1873 as the home of the social and cultural life of the Czech people. It was constructed according to the plans of the Austrian architect Theofil von Hansen, who was one of the most prominent architects in Vienna in the second half of the 19th century. This palace, which stood at the corner of the streets Besední and Husova that were part of the Brno ring road, was at the centre of musical events taking place in the city. More than a hundred years after its completion, it was reconstructed for the needs of what was then the Brno State Philharmonic. As with Klein's Palace on the square náměstí Svobody, which

D112



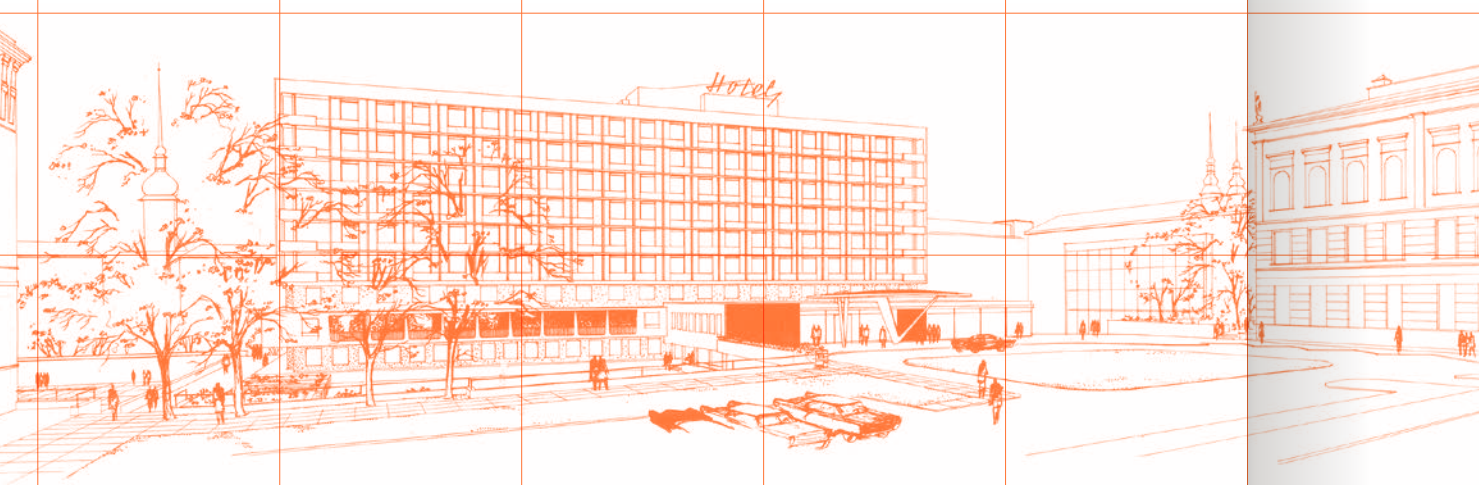
was renovated for the Young Artists Gallery and the Jiří Mahen Library in the same period, the design for the restoration of the Besední dům in 1987 was drawn up by the architects Jiří Mikšík and Jindřich Kaňek. The aim of the reconstruction, which was not completed until 1995, after the fall of communism, was to preserve as much as possible of the original substance and architectural tone of the three-storey building inspired by the Roman Renaissance. Apart from securing the structural integrity of the building, it was also necessary to preserve and restore the original decorative art details, while at the same time creating suitable conditions for the modern operation of the Philharmonic orchestra, its administrative functions, and a café on the ground floor. One of the requirements of the investor, the Brno State Philharmonic, was the functional separation of these operational parts so they would not negatively influence each other. Therefore, a new main entrance for guests was created leading from the outdoor courtyard adjoining that of the neighbouring Pražák Palace, which has always formed a single urban unit together with the Besední dům. At the end of the 1980s, the Pražák Palace was also reconstructed and later became the main residence of the Moravian Gallery. The slightly set-back courtyard, separated from the street, thus became the entrance and a relaxation area for visitors. The five entrances on the ground floor of the atrium, separated by embossed half-columns, were fully glazed, giving the ceremonial foyer with dressing rooms and the entrance to the café a brightly illuminated character. The original two-storey banquet hall with its coffered ceiling and a decoratively cantilevered gallery was sensitively adapted to create the main concert space. The Besední dům is still the home of the Brno Philharmonic and accommodates its music programme, rehearsal rooms and administrative headquarters. Due to the demands of more space and the operational limitations of this listed historical building, the city is in the process of building a large music complex with a concert hall very close to the Besední dům on a vacant site on Veselá Street. ○

● **D115**
Reconstruction of Pražák Palace, after 1948 and 1985, 1990–1993, 2001–2002, 2015, Zdeněk Michal, Jiří Kopřiva, Petr Všečka → C3 Husova 535/18, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

To have an apartment building built on Brno's new Ringstrasse [ring road], on the boulevard Eliščina třída, was a matter of great expense and prestige. The client in this case was the prominent Moravian politician, nobleman and lawyer Alois Pražák (1820–1901), who was also a leading representative of the National (Old Bohemian) Party in Moravia. For this project, he commissioned the prominent Viennese architect, Theophil von Hansen, who in his design for the Pražák Palace followed on from another of his works, the neighbouring grand palace Besední dům, and joined the two buildings into a unique Neo-Renaissance ensemble. The segmentation of the building's facades with stucco decoration and its distinctive crowning cornice draws inspiration from the architecture of Tuscan palaces. The building was renovated at the end of the 19th century. After the communist coup of 1948, the building was confiscated and became property of the state. The lady

who had inherited it was only allowed to keep one apartment and the others were either rented out or converted into offices. In 1985, responsibility for the building was transferred to the Moravian Gallery in Brno. Although a few minor repairs were done in the 1980s, the lack of funds for restoration left its mark on the cultural monument. It was subsequently decided that the building would be reconstructed and adapted for the new purpose of a picture gallery, but work did not begin until 1990. The eventual reconstruction was entrusted to the architects Zdeněk Michal and Jiří Kopřiva. They needed to address the disarray in the overall appearance of the building due to inappropriate renovations (knocking through door and other openings, the removal of original historicizing elements, such as floors and brass door fittings, etc.). The only surviving aspects of its original late 19th century appearance were the plaster entrance hall, the garden salon and the area of the staircase. The architects were therefore required to tackle a number of important problems during the reconstruction, such as removing the side entrances on the east of the building, dealing with the problem of damp, repairing the plaster and the roof, and preserving all the original elements of the building. Above all, the operation of the picture gallery required attention, as the display halls were formerly arranged in series of back-to-back corridors. The official public opening of the exhibited collections of the Moravian Gallery in Pražák Palace took place on 25 November 1993.

The building underwent further renovations in the period 2001–2002 and in 2015. During the most recent changes, elaborated by architects from Petr Všečka's TRANSAT studio, a slide was installed, which allows visitors to 'slide through time' from the exhibition space on the second floor to the exhibition space on the first. The south-facing main entrance was also relocated to the courtyard, which is now used as a space for displaying sculptural works, as an outdoor café area, and as a venue for ceremonial exhibition openings. Pražák Palace has a large exhibition space, featuring permanent exhibitions on the first and second floors and temporary exhibitions in the atrium and on fourth floor. It also houses Moravian Gallery headquarters and a specialist library with study room. Unusual features of the museum building are the open, publicly accessible depository of sculptures on the ground floor and the special playroom for children, designed by the artist Vendula Chalánková. In 2014, the original restorer's studio in the courtyard of the gallery was converted into a new variable cultural space with a gallery café named Praha by the 4AM Forum for Architecture and Media, according to a design by the architects Jakub Kopec and Jaroslav Sedlák. Up until the end of 2019, Praha was an important lecture and exhibition space. The venue hosted lectures on architecture, art interventions, workshops, happenings, discussions and forums, audio-visual screenings and symposia, as well as concerts of electronic, improvised and contemporary classical music, dance improvisations, and authorial and experimental theatre. Since 2020, the space has been used as a gallery pub called U Pražáků. ○



● D116

Hotel International, 1958–1962,
Vilém Kuba, Jaroslav Ledvína,
Vítězslav Unzeitig, Miloslav Kramoliš,
Arnošt Krejza, Zdeňka Kopecká,
Miroslav Brabec, Zbyšek Kašpar
→ C3 Husova 200/16, Brno-střed
(Brno-město)

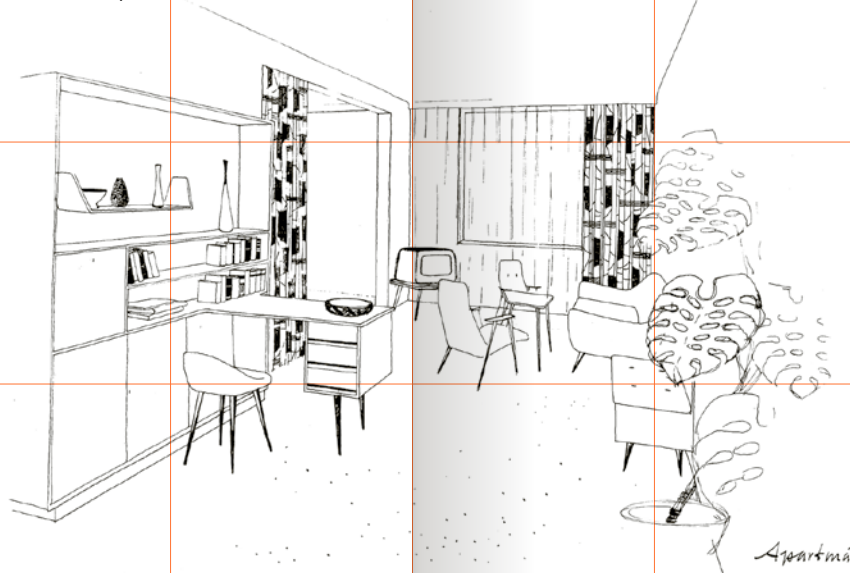
Brno's flourishing trade fairs, which had an international dimension, resulted in the previously-mentioned shortage of accommodation for visitors, and by the end of the 1950s it had become a pressing problem. The first and most significant step towards addressing this deficiency was the construction of the Hotel International in 1962, which is similar in its expressive quality to the administrative building of Brno Exhibition Centre. The site of the hotel was a prominent location at the edge of the historical city centre. The concept was based on creating a new landmark, which would also blend in with the surrounding buildings. The authors of the original plan from 1957 were Vilém Kuba, Jaroslav Ledvína and Vítězslav Unzeitig. However, after a political vetting of 1958 the project was taken over by Miloslav Kramoliš, Arnošt Krejza, Zdeňka Kopecká, Miroslav Brabec and Zbyšek Kašpar.

A plot of approximately two hectares between the streets Husová and Veselá was chosen for the site of the new hotel, which was bordered on two sides by important Neo-Renaissance monuments, namely Pražák Palace and the Museum of Applied Arts. This was originally the site of the city ramparts and a barracks, which were decommissioned in the late 19th century. The devastating bombing of 1944 had left the largest open space of the war and it had been originally earmarked for an extension to the New Town Hall or a new building for the municipal authority. The hotel building occupies a large area in the city centre. In addition to the block of hotel rooms, there are several restaurants and bars, an open and an underground car park, relaxation terraces, a series of staircases outside the building that connect the streets Husova and Veselá and a small area of greenery. In order to leave sufficient space for the two prominent Neo-Renaissance palaces on either side, the main rectangular body of the hotel was set further back, thereby creating a space for a car park.

The eleven-storey block of the main building rests on a massive reinforced concrete slab, above which

a skeleton of the same material was erected. The main entrance from Husova street is accentuated by a distinctive entrance canopy supported by V-shaped pillars, which were popular at that time. The canopy extends from protruding front block that opens up to the third floor, where there is a reception hall, a bar, a lounge, several smaller salons and a number of VIP rooms, including a government suite. These are visible from the outside as a row of loggias with tapering columns. Not only this organically shaped element but also the concept of the facade came in for criticism at the time (which is quite the opposite of the current perspective). The primary complaint centred on the disparateness of the means of expression used on the exterior and in the interiors of the building, which were criticized for the overlarge and immoderate richness of the decoration, and the excessive combinations of materials.

The grid of the facade indicates the internal arrangement of the hotel rooms on seven floors. The individual squares, delineated by a structure of vertical and horizontal lines with steel window frames and aluminium glazing bars, are filled with coloured panes of glass with an aluminium frame. This creates the impression that the walls consist only of the light panes of glass, behind which, however, are burnt clay bricks. The reception hall is connected by a corridor and a staircase to the lower floors, where there is a second entrance facing Veselá street, flanked by a night bar and a restaurant with a summer terrace. These sections, as with the spaces of the social



areas above them, diverge from the main block of the building and form a separate lower wing. There are operations rooms on the lower floors, and at the level of the streets Skrytá and Besední there is an entrance for deliveries and the underground garage. In 1960, while the hotel was being built, a competition was announced for the works of art that would adorn the building. Many prominent artists took part, some of whom, such as Stanislav Libenský, Jaroslava Brychtová and Miloslav Klinger, directly contributed to the preparations for the Expo 58 World Fair. The artistic adornment of the interiors was primarily concerned with the decoration and furnishing of the social spaces, which included the painting and decoration of walls and ceilings, the choice of material for floors, and light fittings. A variety of materials and techniques typical for that period, such as ceramic tiles, mosaics, sgraffito, glass, stone, metal and plastic, were used in the design. The interiors of the Hotel International are a rare, almost perfectly preserved, example of 'Brussels-style' gesamtkunstwerk. One of the most outstanding features is the decorative lattice in the entrance hall by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, which screens off the staircase to the basement and which has become an almost iconic motif. Solid relief blocks of glass, created by Jaroslava Brychtová from clay models of sketches by Stanislav Libenský, are set into a thick metal lattice structure. The crystalline blocks

were produced using an experimental method devised by the artists. The object refers to the legends of the Brno Dragon and the Brno Wheel. Another important work in glass is the decorative wall by Miloslav Klinger set in the restaurant area on the ground floor depicting typical 'Brussels-style' waterfowl among stylized reeds. On the wall opposite the social hall there is a large relief entitled Kuropění [Daybreak] made of wrought sheet metal with a bronze patina by Bohdan Lacina and Miloš Axman. Artworks for the exterior were also an integral part of the artistic concept of the hotel. The dominant feature of the lower part of the staircase connecting the hotel terrace to Veselá street is the monumental figural composition Pohostinství [Tavern] by Sylva Lacinová. On the northern façade there is a large relief from cast concrete inlaid with river pebbles entitled Slunce (Život a mír) [Sun (Life and Peace)] by Sylva Lacinová and Jan Rajlich Sr. The frieze composition bears the hallmarks of 'the Brussels style' in both the material used and the shapes depicted. The motif of the sun's rays and birds flying among them is stylized into a dramatic combination of triangles. In 2013, the hotel's current owner controversially managed to obtain an annulment of its protected monument status and some artworks were removed from the interiors. Nevertheless, some parts of the hotel's interior and exterior are still largely preserved in their original state. ○



● D117

Vkus fashion clothing building, 1962–1966, Arnošt Krejza, Karel Žák, Miloslav Kramoliš, František Sláma, Olga Drápalová
→ C4 Veselá 199/5, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

Following trends in the West, the Hotel International was required to offer its guests services of a high standard, which included clothing alterations and the chance to buy new clothes. Thanks to money saved on the construction of the hotel, and the organizational abilities of some local architects, a Stavoprojekt Brno competition for a Vkus store was announced in 1962. The requirement was for a showroom and clothing store for the People's Clothing Cooperative. It was to be built on the site where some 19th century apartment buildings had once stood. This was part of a larger urban study for a new city structure along with a planned hall of residence for apprentices and a House of Tourism. The winning design by Arnošt Krejza and Karel Žák connected the building to the Hotel International by means of large outdoor terraces and situated the front facade with shop window and main entrance on Veselá street. The concept was to divide the building into three parts. There were sales and exhibition spaces on a raised ground floor, from which a striking marble staircase led to a first floor with other organizational spaces in the interior. They were connected to the hotel by a long corridor that also led to the adjoining building of the former YWKY, now known as Jalta Palace. The architects reserved the top floor for sewing workshops, storerooms, and sanitary facilities for the cooperative's employees. In terms of style, the building combines First Republic architectural design with the emerging dynamic modernism of the 1960s. Although the interior of the store is open to Veselá street through the large windows on all three above-ground floors, the overall impression for the passerby is diminished due to the proximity of the opposite building. This siting of the building closer to the street was apparently influenced by street line of the former residential buildings, but the architects did not sufficiently allow for the need to promote the Vkus showroom, whose effect is attenuated in this narrow part of Veselá street. According to surviving studies in the Stavoprojekt archive, there was a plan to build the previously mentioned hall of residence in the same area, but as with the House of Tourism, the plan never materialized. In the end, the store was popular with customers primarily, due to the open interior space, which, because of its reinforced concrete monolithic structure, could offer the light needed for displaying clothing. Moreover, the architects František Sláma and Olga Drápalová used polished metal, glass, and special lighting to create highly attractive interiors and one of the most luxurious shops in Brno, which contrasted sharply with the run-down businesses around it. The iconic blue-white neon Vkus sign above the main entrance is a significant feature of the exterior of the building to this day. The building has retained its original architectural and artistic expression in spite of minor modifications. ○

● D118

Sputnik milk bar, 1959, Jaroslav Brychta
→ D3 Česká 161/1, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

From the late 1950s onwards, Sputnik milk bar was among the most significant establishments serving snacks and refreshments in Brno. It was located in a Neo-Baroque palace at the junction of the streets Česká, Středová and Veselá. The interiors of the milk bar drew inspiration from the aesthetics of 'the Brussels style'. The Sputnik building was designed by the architect Artur Weiss in 1914 as the main office of the First General Austrian Insurance Company. In the interwar period, it was transformed into a cinema according to a design by Bohumír Čermák. From 1935, it served as a department store with cafeteria for the Olomouc company ASO (Andr and Son Olomouc), which, in the 1930s, was building a network of shopping centres throughout the country. After the war, with the change in political regime, the majority of such companies were nationalized and catering establishments were managed by a state organization called Restaurace a jídelny [Restaurants and Canteens]. This body was also responsible for Sputnik milk bar, which opened in September 1959, and whose name and logo commemorated the first Soviet space satellite launched into orbit two years earlier.

The interior of the cafeteria was designed by the sculptor and artist Jaroslav Brychta, who had long been working as teacher and head of the School of Applied Arts for Glass-making in Železný Brod. This designer, who won awards for his glass figurines of animals at the 1958 EXPO exhibition in Brussels, had also worked on architectural projects such as the construction of his own wooden house in Železný Brod (1934) and the interiors of the milk bar on Nádražní, by the Brno's main railway station, in collaboration with the architect Zdeněk Řihák (1958). The main entrance was situated on the rounded corner of the building and led to the ground floor cafeteria, while the upper floor was reserved for a higher category restaurant with a large seating area for customers. As with the milk bar by the railway station, Sputnik combined suspended ceilings in organic shapes, borders of neon lights, steel tubing for counters and tables along with stone, ceramic and melamine surfaces, and laminate seating furniture.

The milk bar was closed in the 1990s and its interior was not preserved. A shop now occupies the space where it once stood. ○

● D119

Milk bar on náměstí Svobody, 1949–1950, Jiří Velek
→ D4 náměstí Svobody 90/19, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

During the course of the 1950s, a number of establishments offering snacks and refreshments appeared in often frequented parts of the centre of Brno. One of these was the milk bar that opened in 1950, right on the main square, náměstí Svobody. This purveyor of dairy delicacies was housed in the baroque palace on the corner of Zámečnická street. The architectural design of the bar had been drawn up a year earlier by Jiří Velek. In the years 1958–1959, other milk bars would appear: one near the railway station (designed by Zdeněk Řihák and Jaroslav Brychta) and one on Česká street (by Jaroslav Brychta).

Architect Jiří Velek, who would go on to design the Keramoprojekt building in 1962, located the new milk bar in the





ground floor business space of the four-story building. The main entrance was set between two large shop windows, which gave the interior of the bar a light and airy character. On the façade above them, there were strips of glass bricks and a neon sign characteristic of 'the Brussels style' running the entire length of the façade facing the square. The artistic decoration of the milk bar was done in the years 1953–1955 by the Brno painter Bohumír Matal, a member of Group 42, who devoted himself to painting, sgraffito and ceramic architectural projects in the post-war years. For the milk bar, he used a realistically depicted motif of a herd of cows in the form of a large-format wall painting, which was similar to the interior of the nearby Tempo bar, another design by Jiří Velek (1950), in which he painted the motif of a group of horses. Nothing remains of the original interior or exterior of the milk bar, or the paintings. It closed shortly after the 1989 revolution and, after the space was reconstructed, its place was taken by the first McDonald's fast-food restaurant in Brno. ○

● D120

Rozkvět department store, 1950, 2004–2005, ?, Ivo Balusek, David Písařík, Radka Weberová, Radomír Staněk, Lukáš Bílek → D4 náměstí Svobody 85/16, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

On the south-western side of the square náměstí Svobody, between the Renaissance House of the Lords of Lipá and the Neo-Renaissance Klein's Palace, both important historical buildings, there was once a Baroque burgher house that had been used down the years for residential, retail and banking purposes. During the Second World War, it was badly damaged in the bombing of Brno

and had to be demolished. The vacant site in a prestigious location in the very heart of the city centre was soon occupied by a five-storey office building, modified in 1950 for the purposes of a department store for the state enterprise Rozkvět, which later became part of the nationwide network of PRIOR stores. In accordance with efforts to renew the quality of services that had been decimated by the war, Rozkvět was meant to expand the opportunities for shopping and refreshment in the centre of Brno, as was the case with the nearby market hall on Zelný trh and the Milk Bar, a few houses down on the square. Unlike the former burgher house, which was a floor lower than its neighbouring buildings, the Rozkvět building, which opened in 1951, was the same height, thereby balancing the frontage of the square. On the other hand, its smooth façade, punctuated only by four large windows on each of its floors, stood in contrast to the decorative facades of Klein's Palace and the House of the Lords of Lipá. The main entrance was located in the middle of a light glazed ground-floor below a neon sign advertising the name of the department store. The most striking decorative element of the otherwise modest building was a huge luminous letter R extending the height of one floor, together with a continuous neon tube that circled the entire façade. Particularly in the evening, Rozkvět took on an illuminated metropolitan appearance that was reminiscent of

the city's interwar tradition, when it boasted many excellent functionalist department stores in the centre.

Rozkvět was completely reconstructed in the years 2004–2005 according to a project by a team of architects consisting of Ivo Balusek, David Písařík, Radka Weberová, Radomír Staněk and Lukáš Bílek. The new façade is now glazed and is completely covered on the upper floors by reflective blinds. The original shape of the business space on the ground floor has disappeared along with the elegant neon signs. The building is still a shopping centre, but also offers offices and residential units, while serving as a passageway that connects the main square with the adjoining street of Panská. ○

● D121

Reconstruction of Klein palace, 1986, Jiří Mikšík → D4 náměstí Svobody 84/15, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

This Neo-Renaissance palace was built in the years 1847 and 1848 in the heart of Brno on what is currently known as the square náměstí Svobody. It was the family residence of the Klein family of industrialists, whose main entrepreneurial activity was iron production and is alluded to in the form of cast-iron oriels and sculptural decorations on the façade of the building. The grand four-storey city-centre palace with inner courtyard, spacious residential rooms facing the square, and interiors resplendent with artistic craftsmanship was designed by the Austrian architects Ludwig Förster and Theofil von Hansen, who were renowned representatives of historicist style and had been involved in the rebuilding of the Vienna (and Brno) ring roads. After a series of changes in ownership, the building was expropriated after the communist coup of February 1948, and was placed under municipal administration. It subsequently underwent a series of modifications that deprived it of its original character as a residential building.

In the mid-1980s, in connection with plans for an urban conservation area in the city centre and the gradual restoration of historical monuments, Klein's Palace was singled out as a possible location for the Department of Culture because of its central position. On the basis of designs by the architect Jiří Mikšík of Stavoprojekt Brno, the former burgher house was subsequently reconstructed for the purposes of the Young Artists' Gallery and the music department of the Jiří Mahen Library so as to create an easily accessible centre for the culturally-minded public. The original layout of the building was largely preserved. On the ground floor, with large shop windows on either side of the main entrance onto the street, spaces were created for shops dedicated to jewellery and photo processing. The round staircase in the central part of the building was retained as the building's main connecting link. The three former residential rooms facing the square on each of the upper floors of the palace were transformed into exhibition spaces, lecture rooms, reading rooms and, on the top floor, an interconnected multi-purpose hall. The smaller rooms around the inner courtyard, on the ground floor, served as storage facilities and a reception area, and on the upper floors they served as club rooms for special-interest organizations, refreshment rooms or library listening rooms.

After the fall of the communist regime, in the late 1990s, Klein's Palace underwent another reconstruction, in which it was transformed into a banking and shopping centre with a glass atrium illuminated from above. ○

● D122

Municipal market hall, 1947–1950, Vilém Zavřel, Emanuel Hruška → D5 Zelný trh 325/18, Brno-střed (Brno-město)

The building of the municipal market hall, which was designed as a retail area for foodstuffs, was built on the north side of the square Zelný trh, a marketplace for fruit and vegetables down the centuries. The large gap created by the gradual collapse and subsequent demolition of three residential buildings in the early 1940s served as the site for a year-round market hall which would accommodate stall holders from the square and symbolically signal a return to the quality services of the 1920s and 1930s that had been violently interrupted by the war. The market hall was built in the years 1947–1950 according to a design by the architects Emanuel Hruška and Vilém Zavřel, who were intimately familiar with the morphology of International Style. The building was inaugurated in 1951, a time of harsh Stalinist rule, perpetual food shortages and officially propagated socialist realism. Nevertheless, the architectural expression of the market hall was still rooted in Brno's strong interwar functionalist traditions and it became one the most important post-war examples of its kind, alongside Rozehnal's Children's Hospital and the Czechoslovak State Railways Directorate by Evžen Škarda

The four-storey building combines two main parts: a projecting glazed open-plan hall on the first floor, connected to a simple, higher, cubical wing opening onto the streets Starobrněnská and Mečová. The frequent repetition of huge ribs separating the windows running along the floors into vertical strips and the curvature of the suspended façade of the hall create the highly dynamic character of the main frontage. It was envisaged that Vincenc Makovský, Sylva Lacinová-Jílková, Ladislav Martinek and Karel Zouhar would create sculptural decoration for the façade, but this idea never materialized. The monumentality of the building was also enhanced by its sandstone cladding. For the structure of the market hall, the architects Hruška and Zavřel opted for a reinforced concrete skeleton, which, among other things, made it possible to leave the retail areas as open, unified spaces, brightly illuminated by light entering through the suspended glass wall of the façade. At the same time, from inside, this offered panoramic views of the historical square and the Parnas Fountain, particularly from the gallery of the second floor with its light glass railing, from where it was also possible to view the market down through its floors.

In a clumsy 1990s reconstruction, the building was converted from a traditional market hall into an ordinary department store (with the addition of escalators and steel columns on the façade). It was closed to the public and fell further into disrepair, partially empty and partly used as storage space for market stall holders. The building once again returned its original function as a covered marketplace in 2017. Led by the architect Michal Palaščík, the reconstruction cleared the building of its poor quality additions and re-opened the sheltered walkway on the ground floor, thereby connecting Zelný trh with the streets Starobrněnská and Radniční. ○