

Chrudim – population of 22 950

“Reconstruction of St. Joseph’s Church and Monastery Gardens“



The project involves the reconstruction of a church and parterre landscaping of its adjacent area.

The project of Museum of Baroque Statues in Chrudim draws on a tradition of Baroque sculpture, which from the beginning until mid-18th century were at the top of artistic creations in Bohemia. The complex of the Capuchin monastery and its dominant feature of the St. Joseph Church is situated in the very centre of Chrudim. After 50 years of neglect and devastation, the church will now become a

cultural point and its exhibition of outdoor Baroque statues will have a wider than Regional bearing.

The project of revitalisation of the St. Joseph Church and of the Monastery Gardens drew from strategic planning and the Municipal Conservation Zoning Plan. A EU grant helped to finance the reconstruction. The project was based on a design by architect Roman Brychta of PROJEKTIL ARCHITEKTI s.r.o. group from Prague. An inspiration for the architectural design was found in the significance of the simple Capuchin life both in faith and service.

Initially, the complex of St. Joseph’s Church and Monastery was built according to a standard design of an Italian architect Antonio of Pordenone. The church stands in the south and the monastery living quarters were east of this. They occupied three wings enclosing a cloister garth and a well in its middle. There was an ambulatory around the cloister garth. The work started in 1662 and in 1665 the church was consecrated. It is 34 m long and over 10 m wide. The presbytery is almost 6 m wide.

The Capuchin monastery ceased to serve its function after WW II when the last members of the order left Chrudim. Today, the buildings have been adapted and the church houses a Museum of Baroque Statues.

The main target of the Museum of Baroque Statues is to recall the Baroque Era and to enhance Chrudim’s position in the cultural map of Bohemia as well as central Europe. Functionally, the church is divided into two main sections. The Museum is in the nave and adjacent areas. A part of this section (the presbytery) can be used for ceremonies (weddings). The basement can be used for other cultural activities. It has all the background facilities (e.g. toilets even for disabled visitors, a boiler room), the remaining area is left free. The chief idea behind making new use of St. Joseph’s Church was to make it multifunctional.

The gardens are part of a former Capuchin monastery founded in the late 17th century just outside the walls of the royal town. Today the complex is within the Municipal Conservation Zone. The municipal tourist route, the “Golden Path” passes between the town walls and the river.

An inspiration for the revitalisation of the gardens and the architectural planning was found in the historical development of the Capuchin gardens and the morphology of the landscape. The gardens used to have four sections: a





utility garden, an orchard, a cloister garth and a cemetery for monks. The restoration aimed at drawing on this historical division while creating a modern park with modern facilities. The morphology of the area helps to create natural boundaries between the sections. The original garden is the principal area.

Functionally, the garden has been divided into four sections:

1. entrance area - visitors can access the garden from four points. The walkways are used for walking through the gardens or relaxing and they provide beautiful views.

2. a plane - all the activities are concentrated here, sheltered by large crowns of solitary trees. There is a playground for little children, a pétanque ground and parquet. Games, plays, music and rustling leaves on the trees define the plane as a garden of acoustic sensations.

3. an orchard and promenade – the orchard concept is a mature meadow with a fruit-grove, little plots among the trees and a water element. In form, this is the most varied section of the gardens. Fruit from the trees, herbs and the cool water from the well define the orchard as a garden of tastes.

At the rear of the orchard is a “Sunny promenade”. The sunny promenade and the promenade, bordering the plane and the orchard, are interlinked by carefully planned park paths.

4. a rose garden - the enclosed area within the town walls has been reserved for a rosary. A small intimate rose garden, full of small blooms, trimmed hedges and shaped flowerbeds – a garden of scents and colours.

The total area of the gardens is 12 003 m². Within the reconstruction of the monastery gardens in Chrudim, vegetation elements were restored and new ones added. Woody plants were left in place according to their health and aesthetic value. Old fruit trees, especially, create a unique atmosphere, contributing to an authentic “genius loci”. Endemic species of fruit trees have been planted in the orchard to enhance its new appearance and function. The aim was to create an airy space historically linking onto the original function of the monastery orchard. The assortment of fruit trees draws on the existing species – apple, pear, plum, cherry and apricot. A flowery meadow has been started throughout the orchard. The flowery meadow under the trees, just as the selection of endemic species of newly planted trees, draws on the traditional concept of orchards.

The central the plane has been planted with grown solitaire leaf trees at irregular “sporadic” spacing - plane, small-leaf linden, Norway maple, horse-chestnut, yellow-poplar and decorative apple and pear trees. The decorative species of fruit trees draw on the thematic idea of monastery gardens used for production. In size they complement the area of tall fully-grown trees, their blooms and decorative fruit are effective. Tall long-living trees provide the area with desired shade, create a great atmosphere against the monastery building in the background and make a natural division of the multi-purpose area.

Medicinal herbs and aromatic plants are, without doubt, traditional in monastery gardens. Herbal beds have been arranged along the Sunny Promenade.

The Monastery Gardens are designed to suit all age groups and both the gardens and the Church of St. Joseph provide a space for various social activities.

