CZECH ARCHITECTURE AWARD 2026

Jury Report

Architecture is never only about buildings. It is about places, people and the different ways in which architecture can shape everyday life. It tells us who we are, what values we hold, and how we want to live together. The projects submitted for the 2026 Czech Architecture Award demonstrate a strong awareness of the challenges facing our society and our cities today. They explore how architecture can contribute through the reuse of existing structures and materials, the use of renewable materials such as engineered timber, and interventions that improve the livability and accessibility of our cities.

This year's jury brought together architects with backgrounds in practice, teaching and writing, and with extensive experience across Belgium, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Spain and Germany. This diversity of backgrounds allowed us to discuss the 301 submitted works from very different perspectives and led to particularly rich and engaged exchanges.

The enormous variety of submissions was one of the defining qualities of this year's award: from small interventions and private houses to housing complexes, schools and public buildings; from interiors and pavilions to parks and public spaces; from projects in rural landscapes and small communities to major interventions in cities. Different scales, programmes, contexts and architectural attitudes stood side by side.

In several online sessions, based on the submitted photographs, texts and drawings, we selected

25 nominated projects out of 301 entries. Two considerations guided us: first and foremost, each project had to demonstrate exceptional architectural quality. At the same time, we wanted the nominations to reflect the remarkable diversity of contemporary architecture in the Czech Republic.

The journey through the country then fundamentally changed our perspective. Visiting the projects allowed us to experience what drawings and photographs cannot fully communicate: how a building meets the ground, how spaces connect, how materials age, how architecture relates to the landscape and integrates into the city – and, most importantly, how it is actually inhabited and used.

Some projects that appeared convincing on paper became less so when visited; others revealed unexpected qualities and became much stronger. Small projects could compete with large ones, modest interventions with prestigious buildings, rural projects with urban ones. Neither scale nor budget was decisive. What mattered was the intelligence, precision and generosity with which architecture responded to its specific conditions. The full story of architecture can only be understood on site, when it is told experienced and encountered first-hand. Often, it is the sum of many details, the atmosphere and the quality of execution that make a project exceptional – qualities that can remain almost invisible in photographs.

This is perhaps what the Czech Architecture Award demonstrates most clearly: architectural quality has no single scale, program or language. It can emerge in a forest, a village, a school, a cemetery, a railway station or a major urban building. The strongest

projects do more than solve a task – they create possibilities, strengthen communities and contribute something lasting to their surroundings. We were also inspired by initiatives that emerge from the bottom up, and by projects that achieve a great deal with limited means. Together, they show how architecture can respond to the world around us with creativity, care and responsibility. It was a privilege for the jury to experience this remarkable range of work and to encounter the projects in their actual settings. Architecture is at its strongest when it transforms not only places, but the way we understand and use them.

We covered more than 1,600 km to visit the nominated projects. Along the way, we enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the historic towns and villages. Travel time between the various locations often ranged from one to several hours. During the drives, we had plenty of time to exchange ideas and refine our viewpoints. These conversations became an important part of the jury process: we shared our impressions, challenged one another's perspectives and remained open to each other's personal and professional input.

We discussed a great deal – intensely, openly and with genuine enthusiasm. Selecting the six finalists involved weighing the strengths and weaknesses of each project through several rounds of evaluation and deliberation. These discussions were sometimes passionate but always driven by curiosity and respect for the different perspectives within the jury.

For us, the final selection – the finalists, the honourable mentions, the winner of the Czech Architecture Award and the winner of the Alena Šrámková Award – represents an outstanding spectrum of the architecture currently being created in the Czech Republic. Together, these projects reflect the diversity of approaches, scales and contexts we encountered throughout the entire jury process. All jury members stand by the outcome.

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Our sincere thanks go to the Czech Chamber of Architects and the entire organizing team for the excellent preparation and support throughout the jury process and our journey, and especially to the architects, clients and users who welcomed us, opened their buildings to us and shared their experiences.

Congratulations to all of you.