

JURY REPORT

The background of the jury members includes working in Slovakia, The United Kingdom, Spain, Slovenia, Norway, Finland, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Poland, Israel, France, and a few other countries, which created the potential to engage in spontaneous architectural discourse at any and all times! This fruitful discussion acted as an unspoken bottom line that enabled us to select, qualify, and value the diverse qualities of the projects submitted for the 2025 Czech Architecture Award.

A total of 235 projects were submitted. In two online jury meetings, we reduced the number of projects to be visited down to 25. We did not specify or qualify according to scale or by using typologies as criteria. Instead, we focused on a single criterion: quality.

Twenty-five projects of very high quality were selected, ranging from pavilions to office buildings, single-family dwellings, refurbishments, and landscape designs. They were situated in both urban and rural environments, in urban peripheries, and in existing buildings.

Our wonderful support team from the Czech Chamber of Architects – Dagmar Mošnerová, Barbora Sedlářová, and Marek Job – masterminded a four-day jury trip across the Czech Republic to view the projects we had selected and meet the architects and owners of each specific project. The timing was incredible! By the time we had selected the finalists and the winner, well after midnight on the fourth day of the journey, we were completely exhausted. We travelled by bus to the selected projects, starting off in Prague, then heading west, north, and finally east, very close to the border. We had also selected projects in the southern and south-eastern parts of the country, which we visited before returning to Prague to visit the remaining projects on our list. Each day, we visited five to seven projects, speaking to architects and clients and giving interviews in between. On our bus rides from one project to the next, which sometimes lasted far longer than an hour, we discussed our impressions and found a wonderful way of working together, accepting open discussion without prejudice, and respecting each other and the individual knowledge we possess.

Due to our respective backgrounds, we were able to place the projects we visited within the context of European architecture. We perceived that the architectural quality of projects was, without a doubt, on par with the projects we know in most European countries. The quality of materialisation, detailing, and execution is remarkably high.

Due to the high quality we encountered, selecting the prize-winning group was indeed a difficult task. We discussed the pros and cons in depth, and then there was also some reading between the lines that influenced our decisions. Ultimately, we did not have to vote, as our decisions were deeply consensual; all jury members supported the decisions necessary to select the winning project and the runners-up.

It is hard to say if the projects we were able to view are a seismograph of contemporary architectural production in the Czech Republic, because we were only able to evaluate the projects submitted by architects. It could be that, beyond the 235 projects submitted, there are more high quality projects of different scale and typology worth considering for an annual architecture award. It's possible, but it is always a difficult challenge to find the most interesting, groundbreaking projects in architectural production in any country at a particular moment. This should be viewed as encouragement for architects to submit projects for the

next Czech Architecture Award, especially projects of high complexity. As jury members, we were well aware of the greater complexity attached to larger scale projects.

I am also confident that the members of next year's jury will also acknowledge high complexity as an important architectural quality.

In essence, architects can be understood as existing somewhere between artists and engineers. They are in the difficult role of trying to manifest their own ideas, while simultaneously being paid by clients who would like to see their own ideas become real. We architects are by now well-acquainted with the climate change caused by buildings and construction; we are aware of the environmental impact the production of materials has, and of side effects like increased mobility, among many other issues. This perhaps explains why environmental issues were not addressed to a great extent in the projects we visited, with a few exceptions. Still, perhaps we were lucky not to be confronted with greenwashed projects, projects pretending to be environmentally sustainable and claiming more than they can promise.

Ultimately, we were able to deal with projects of high architectural quality, no more, no less. At its core, good, high-quality architecture is inherently sustainable.

Old towns, which we all enjoy visiting, have never undergone any fundamental change, except for issues of mobility. The buildings themselves have basically always stayed the same. Perhaps there have been changes in use over the years, maybe the technical equipment has been updated, but the building itself has remained the same. This is the highest degree of sustainability buildings can achieve. This statement should not be read as a plea for designing old buildings – not at all – but for taking into far greater consideration the qualities old buildings possess and then interpreting them in a contemporary way, manifesting a sustainable architecture. The jury was able to visit quite few projects with these qualities.

Congratulations! It was a wonderful experience.

Thank you.