**FOOTBRIDGE IN LITOMYŠL WINS THE 2023 CZECH ARCHITECTURE AWARD**

*Press release CCA, 9 November 2023*

**The results of the 8th edition of the** [**Czech Architecture Award**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en) **(CAA), a competitive showcase of completed architectural projects organised by the** [**Czech Chamber of Architects**](https://en.cka.cz/) **(CCA) were announced on 9 November during a gala evening held at Forum Karlín and broadcast live online on ČT art. Lukáš Ehl and Tomáš Koumar of EHL & KOUMAR ARCHITEKTI in collaboration with Ladislav Dvořák and Ladislav Šašek claimed the Main Award with their design of** [**Footbridge in Litomyšl**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/lavka-v-litomysli)**. In the finale of this year’s Czech Architecture Award, the jury chose from among six works. The Winner and the Finalists were selected from 31 nominated works presented by the CCA during a nomination evening in June of this year. A total of 241 implemented works completed in the Czech Republic over the past five years competed for the 8th annual Czech Architecture Award.**

**Five Partner Awards were also presented: The Ministry of Regional Development Award for the Promotion of Quality Construction Through Architectural Competitions, The Ministry of Industry and Trade Award for Revitalisation of a Brownfield Site, The Nature Conservation Agency Award for a Sensitive and Environmentally Friendly Construction in a Natural Landscape, The Central Group Prize for an Innovative Approach to Designing New Housing and The Vekra Prize for the Elevation of Fundamental Building Materials to Art.**

*“The Czech Architecture Award fulfils the statutory mission of the Czech Chamber of Architects and the updated Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic very well – it presents quality architecture implemented in our country to professionals and, in particular, to the lay public. Over the eight years of its existence, the CAA has become the best tool for the promotion and popularisation of our field with quality judged by European standards, all without burdening the Chamber’s budget and while remaining free to enter,” stated Jan Kasl, President of the CCA and the CAA Academy. “The CAA has gradually grown to encompass year-round activity spread through the regions, including dozens of exhibitions and many talks, lectures and other events for the general public. Its media impact has made it the leading competitive showcase in the CR this year and I am grateful to the partners for supporting the dissemination of examples of good practice and thus inspiring both private and public sector approaches to renovation or the design of new buildings. An international jury evaluates the implementations regardless of their size or degree of investment, and highlights excellence reflecting contemporary trends and timelessness based on local experience,” added Kasl.*

The Finalists were selected from 31 nominated works by an international jury chaired by architect **Taba Rasti** (Spain). Other jurors included architect **Gilma Teodora Gylytė** (Lithuania), architect and urbanist **Joakim Lindmarker** (Sweden), architect, landscape architect and urbanist **Winy Maas** (The Netherlands), architect **Oliver Sadovský** (Slovakia), landscape architect **Maike van Stiphout** (The Netherlands) and **Deyan Sudjic** (The United Kingdom), a writer, curator and critic specialising in the field of design and architecture. In early September, the jurors visited the Czech Republic to view and discuss the nominated works. *“The judging process took us across the Czech Republic, from remote rural enclaves, to historic towns, from former industrial centres looking for a new future, to the monumental heart of Prague. As visitors from abroad, we were made well aware of a long architectural tradition and the work of a new generation of architects,”* stated the jury in their final report. The jury assessed and awarded the entered works without categorisation of any kind. They reiterated the contribution of architecture to society and its importance with regard to physical and social ties. For them, the Czech Architecture Award *“should be understood less as a competition than as a society-wide dialogue on what contemporary architecture can offer the country.”*

**MAIN AWARD AND FINALISTS**

The jury presented the **Main Award** to **Lukáš Ehl, Tomáš Koumar, Ladislav Dvořák** and **Ladislav Šašek** of **EHL & KOUMAR ARCHITEKTI** for the designof [**Footbridge in Litomyšl**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/lavka-v-litomysli)(2022). The new footbridge with an elevator has replaced the original pedestrian bridge from 1981 and provides barrier-free pedestrian access to two parts of the city bisected by a busy road, the area around the municipal office and the historic centre of Litomyšl itself. The subtle steel construction of the bridge is supported by oversized pillars made of exposed concrete. The elevator tower is located on the axis of the original staircase and supports the structure of the footbridge. Graphics by Ivana Šrámková enliven the simple character of the construction. According to the jurors, the footbridge is “*the product of a community that has, over many years, made architecture a significant part of its public life, the subject of a shared civic vision for the future.”* The jurors also appreciated that it is “*an impressive example of a creative collaboration between an architect, an engineer, an artist and the citizens of the town.”* “*A good bridge is like a good deed in an unkind world, an altruistic investment in the public realm, a way to connect people and places, designed in such a way that it is pleasing to experience and to look at,”* the jurors stated in their evaluation of the winning work. “*Litomysl’s new footbridge is exactly that: an entirely convincing synthesis of architecture, engineering and urbanism, connecting two segments of the town, like a contemporary version of the Charles Bridge in Prague,”* they added.

In addition to the winning building, five other diverse works were named **Finalists of the 2023 Czech Architecture Award**. The jury was impressed by the [**Kloboucké Lesní Headquarters**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/sidlo-kloboucke-lesni) in Brumov-Bylnice (2022), designed by Jan Mach and Jan Vondrák of **Mjölk architekti** (also Finalists last year with their project The Guard Patrol). The headquarters of the locally sourced timber company is a showcase for the business; the architects used products from the company catalogue in designing it. The jurors appreciated that “*in terms of ecological sustainability, it is a superb project.”* And, moreover, *“Making an elegant building from wood is a challenge and here it is the size that matters. The many ribs offer beautiful perspectives and allow the structure to fit into the scale of the surrounding landscape,”* they stated.

The [**Redevelopment of a Former Slaughterhouse for the Plato Ostrava Gallery**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/rekonstrukce-historicke-budovy-byvalych-jatek-pro-ucely-galerie-plato-ostrava) (**KWK Promes**, 2022) was also named a Finalist. The project was the result of an architectural competition. The aim was to preserve a valuable former slaughterhouse building. According to the jury, the creative team led by Robert Konieczny succeeded in meeting the expectation that the building would become a new focal point for Ostrava *“by turning a closed, dilapidated and menacing slaughterhouse into an easily accessible and welcoming gallery.”* The jury emphasises that “*by juxtaposing and playing with the difference between then and now, the Plato Ostrava gallery takes a refreshingly balanced stance on the debate concerning conservation, renovation and renewal.”*

Another Finalist, [**Memorial to the Three Resistance Movements**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/pamatnik-tri-odboju) (2022) is the work of Klára Hradečná and Tomáš Hradečný and their team from **IXA** studio. The monument is built on the site of the Mašín family’s homestead in Lošany, which was returned to Zdeňka Mašínová in 2017, and is intended to preserve the memory and legacy of Major General Josef Mašín and his family. The Memorial to the Three Resistance Movements reflects an extraordinary situation, in which the modern history of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic can be read through the fates of a single rural family and their fellow travellers. *“This project is beautiful,”* the jury observes. *“Allowing the family’s old farmhouse to be sprayed with concrete, is not only a radical application of a proven technical solution for the ruin, it also stresses the horror and beauty of the story. A remarkable innovation in heritage policies, it creates impressive spaces and an abstract sculpture that moves us and makes us think,”* the jurors recognised. The project also received the Miloš Vystrčil President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic Award, which was presented to the architects at the CAA nomination evening in June.

[**Park with Cemetery**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/zahrady-se-hrbitovem)(2022) in Prague-Suchdol was also named a Finalist. Designed by Václav Šuba and Jakub Červenka (**OBJEKTOR ARCHITEKTI**), the implementation is the winning project from an architectural competition. The jury found that *“the architectural design and the aesthetic of the cemetery appear natural, everything is sensitively designed in the context of the existing landscape, as if nothing has changed.”* Appreciating the architects’ attention to detail, they continued: *“Emphasis has been placed on the smallest details; here, interior architectural quality has been placed outdoors. Quality details in the cemetery walls include the water taps, seating places and unified visual style for the headstones."*

The jury also recognised [**Balcony Extension**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/rozsireni-lodzii-paneloveho-domu-2023)**, Prague** (2021) from the architects of **re:architekti studio.** *“At first glance, this inconspicuous project is a high-quality example of a minimal intervention creating maximum utility value,”* noted the jury, who appreciated that the project emerged through *“an exemplary process of negotiation and the search for a high-quality consensus amongst the owner-occupiers of the apartments.”* For them, the balcony extension seems to be *“a natural evolution, where the new layer is sensitive and respectful of the tectonics of the original housing block.”* The jurors appreciated the *“subtle intervention of a two-metre wide continuous access balcony. The existing inset balconies, which were previously difficult to use, became fully functional spaces that connect previously separate rooms with a new outdoor terrace and increase the value of the flats.”*

**HONOURABLE MENTION**

The jury recognised [**Public Space Between School Buildings in Červený Kostelec**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/verejne-prostranstvi-mezi-skolami-v-cervenem-kostelci) (**2021 architekti**, 2022) with an Honourable Mention. The project is the result of an architectural competition and the jury appreciated the architects’ and investors’ approach to public space. *“The space looks and feels like a democratic agora, connecting surrounding public buildings such as the school, a city theatre, a restaurant and an ice cream pavilion. Most importantly though, it connects people. With the help of a fairly programmed and designed public space and the semi-open ice cream pavilion, the life of the school has been integrated into the city, and vice-versa,”* the jury noted.

**FIVE PARTNER AWARDS**

The Czech Architecture Award also presented five Partner Awards. **The Ministry of Regional Development CR Award for the Promotion of Quality Construction Through Architectural Competitions** went to the [**SOKEC – Community Cultural Center**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/sokec-spolecensko-kulturni-centrum)(**caraa.cz**, 2021). The project was built in a rundown sokol building in the centre of Hrušovany u Brna. The village lacks a traditional town square, a role that has now been filled by the new social and cultural centre. According to the assessors, *“the renewal of an abandoned location, the previous site of an old Sokol building in the town’s historic centre, is a principle worth emulating. The memory of a place long-used for community and cultural purposes has thus been preserved.”* At the same time, it is *“an example of an appropriate procedure for the preparation of public investments, where the implementation was preceded by an architectural competition.”* The Ministry of Regional Development *“commends the restrained, yet impressive appearance of the building, and its appropriate scale, which reflects the surrounding environment and the connection of interior and exterior spaces, both in the direction of the street and towards the garden, which is an important part of the project.”*

**The Ministry of Industry and Trade Award for Revitalisation of a Brownfield Site** was presented to [**The Gočár Gallery**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/gocarova-galerie)in Pardubice (**TRANSAT architekti**, 2022). This is part of a unique brownfield site, the Winternitz Brothers’ Automatic Mills, which has been saved and exemplarily reconstructed into a modern cultural and social district through a partnership between the public, private and non-profit sectors (Mariana Smetanová and Lukáš Smetana, the Statutory City of Pardubice and Pardubice Region). The Ministry appreciated that, *“thanks to the contracting parties' thoughtful concept and collaboration with leading Czech architectural studios, an excellent project has been created, which gently connects individual buildings, public space and the Chrudimka riverbank.”* The assessors also noted that *“a detailed understanding of Gočár’s composition is evident in the restoration of the mill building.”*

# The Nature Conservation Agency CR presented the Award for a Sensitive and Environmentally Friendly Construction in a Natural Landscape to [Parish Community Center, Lidečko](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/spolecensky-sal-farniho-centra-v-lidecku) (studio AEIOU, 2022). The assessors appreciated the project *“particularly for its sensitive use of materials and mass in a prominent part of the village.”* Although the building containing community amenities sits in an elevated position, on a slope, its mass does not compete with the Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria or the rectory. The architecture of the social hall incorporates the symbolism of the processional route and creates a public space on the site of a former cultural centre from the 1950s. *“A thoughtful approach to the concept of public space has resulted in the close contact and connection of the building and its users with the surrounding landscape,”* the assessors commended.

**The Central Group Prize for an Innovative Approach to Designing New Housing** went to the project [**HOLEČKOVA 26**](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/rocniky/2023/holeckova-26), a new, five-storey, multifunctional building in Prague (**DAM architekti**, 2022). *“The building's architecture is defined by the use of subtle steel constructions, which create the impression of a spacious, linear surface,”* noted the assessors, who appreciated that the *“multifunctional building Holečkova 26 is a successful example of a single ambitious building integrating into the urban fabric.”*

# The Vekra Prize for the Elevation of Fundamental Building Materials to Art was awarded to

# [Fibonacci](https://ceskacenazaarchitekturu.cz/en/years/2023/fibonacci) (Marco Maio Architects, 2022), a terraced vineyard in Prague incorporating the Fibonacci spiral. The built intervention was entirely predetermined by original historical elements, which were either uncovered and preserved, restored or reinterpreted. The assessors appreciated that *“ordinary stone has been transformed with an eye for beauty, functionality, longevity and great detail,”* and also that it was possible *“to elevate something so fundamental to the level of art, a value that transcends the moment or current trends.”*

The recipient of the traditional award for **Unique Achievement** was also named as part of this year’s Czech Architecture Award. The award was presented at the June CAA nomination evening to architects **Miroslav Vodák** and **Tomáš Zdvihal** of the **CBArchitektura** association for their activities. Since 2012, they have worked to promote quality architecture and support architectural competitions.

**For the fifth time, the Czech Architecture Award took place with the support of general partner Central Group, the largest residential builder in the CR. Main partners VELUX, KKCG Real Estate and Vekra continued their support of the showcase, joined this year by the Center for Architecture and Municipal Planning in Prague. The partner for the gala evening was Lenovo.**

**The 2023 Czech Architecture Award in numbers:**

* 241 entered works
* 31 nominated works
* 1 Main Award
* 6 Finalists
* 1 Honourable Mention
* 5 Partner Awards
* 1 Unique Achievement
* 1 Miloš Vystrčil President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic Award

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**ABOUT THE CZECH ARCHITECTURE AWARD**

*The Czech Chamber of Architects, an autonomous professional body with transferred executive powers, announced the competition in keeping with its mission to cultivate public works culture in the Czech Republic and support the pursuit of excellence. By organising the CAA, the Chamber wants to present quality architectural production to the professional and, in particular, the lay public and also to representatives of local and national administrations. In addition to the presence of the expert CAA Academy and the prestigious, seven-member jury, composed of renowned architects, another advantage of the Czech Architecture Award is its role as a unique concept for the promotion of architecture year-round and in individual regions.*

**ABOUT THE CZECH CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS**

The Czech Chamber of Architects is an autonomous professional body with transferred executive powers, which was established by Act No. 360/1992 Coll., on the Professional Practice of Certified Architects and on the Professional Practice of Certified Engineers and Technicians Active in Construction. The CCA is responsible for the professional and ethical standards of architects in the Czech Republic. Since the beginning of 2015, the Chamber has been an official consultative body, proposing laws, legal amendments and regulations related to the practice of architecture. Since January 2016, the CCA has organised the Czech Architecture Award as a competitive showcase. Since 2000, the Chamber has also organised the Exhibition of Diploma Theses and the Czech Chamber of Architects’ Honours.

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