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## **Ecclesiastic buildings newly built and completed in Prague between 1980–2000 : Smíchov – Strašnice – Kobylisy**

### ANNOTATION

The article deals with the architectural conception and realization of ecclesiastic buildings in Prague between 1980 and 2000. Following the excursus to the historical circumstances of the ecclesiastic constructions in Prague during the 20th century the article focuses more closely on the period after 1950. Two buildings from the 1980s and 90s are discussed in detail – The Seventh-day Adventist Oratory in Smíchov and the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary in Strašnice, which in the author's opinion are so pronounced that they deserve to be presented in a mutual contrast. Moreover, they are the only solitary realizations of the period 1980 – 2000, not reconstruction or completion of older buildings. Initiations and historical context of the constructions, the needs and possibilities of the contracting authority and the architects' authorial invention are outlined for both buildings. Further the large renovations from 1990s are mentioned, of the congregation house At Jacob's Ladder and the Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Kobylisy. Architectural comparison of similar structures for ecclesiastical purposes outside Prague concludes the article together with the urbanistic and historical evaluation of the buildings and their setting into the environs context.

### SUMMARY

Within documentation of the architecture from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this article focuses on ecclesiastical buildings in Prague capital city, especially in 1980–2000. In this period a very small number of church buildings were newly realized, therefor detailed attention is paid to two new buildings preserved in its original form and two more pronounced renovations, or completions of buildings. The new buildings are the Oratory of the Seventh Day Adventists No. 2482 in Prague 5-Smíchov from 1985 and the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary No. 1000 in Prague 10-Strašnice from 1992–1994.

These were preceded by the 1967 construction of a congregation house of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren At Jacob's Ladder No. 1264 in Prague 8-Kobylisy according to the project of Swiss architect Ernest Giseler, with a major renovation and modification in 1995, after the design of the architectural studio of Radovan Schaufler and Jakub Roskovec. The realization of church buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is concluded by the end of 1990s by the renovation of the Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus (St. Thérèse of Lisieux, The Little Flower) at Kobylisy Square No. 1000 in Prague 8, completed in 2000. However a significant achievement, essentially it remains only a striking modernization and modification of the original Functionalist chapel.

The oratory of Seventh-day Adventist Church was established after an unfavourable political period in 1950s when this religious organization was first banned and all property confiscated. After re-authorising the activities of the Church in 1956, efforts were undertaken to purchase a building plot or a suitable building for establishing an oratory in Prague area. In 1970s CASD has obtained the approval of State institutions on condition that the church will find and purchases the object or land by their own means. In 1981, CASD bought an unused ceremonially hall at the New Jewish cemetery in Smíchov-Malvazinky, including land, from the Jewish religious community in Prague. The church approached the architect Václav Tříška, who designed the oratory in cooperation with the architect Ladislav Vlachynský. Project documentation was elaborated by the project and engineering organization of the Ministry of Culture under the leadership of Ing. Karel Štětina. The building was ceremonially opened and consecrated on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1985. This construction with Brutalist features includes an above-average comfortably equipped congregation hall with all necessary facilities. Artistic conception of interiors is based on the decorative effect of the materials used, with the application of a single distinctive artwork, the glass sculpture with a relief, performed by Václav Tříška in cooperation with the artist glassmaker Blanka Adensamová.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary in Strašnice is the result of a decade-long effort to build a church in this area, already since the 1920s. First, in 1930, a parish office with a chapel was built. Despite the number of preserved designs of the church from 1930 and later from 1960s, the realized design came up from the architectural competition held in the euphoric period of 1990. The author of the present form of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary is the architect Jindřich Synek. The shell building, completed

in 1994 in the form of a pyramid culminated with a cross at the top, symbolizes the beginning of the more unrestricted efforts for the new rise of church building activities at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which follows the unprecedented construction activity of churches after the establishment of Czechoslovakia during the First Republic. The open hall arrangement of the interior space is complemented by contemporary artistic realizations, incorporated into the concept of the building by author's cooperation with ac. painter Pavel Šlegl and ac. painter Peter Štěpán (statue of the Immaculate Virgin Mary by ac. sculptor Radoš Cvrček, ambon by ac. sculptor. Michal Šarše, the Stations of the Cross by Pavel Vance, crucifix by ac. sculptor. Jaroslav Hylas, stained glass windows by Peter Hoplíček, stained glass of St. Wolfgang by Prof. Josef Oberberger, stained glass of St. Agnes of Bohemia by Jaroslava Fenzlová-Makovičková).

As shown on the examples presented, the origins and appearance of church buildings were evidently greatly influenced by the historical situation of the period. Nevertheless, in an already existing compact or stabilised built-up-area, albeit with restrictive conditions, it was possible to establish quality sacral architecture with the expression corresponding to its function. An overall understanding of these constructions requires continuing in their detailed documentation and presentation of information and evidence illustrating their origins. The coming years offer a number of new opportunities for comparison and even the realization of new sacral constructions.

**Fig. 1.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1264, U Školské zahrady 1, ČCE Church At Jacob's Ladder. **A, B** – building completed in 1971 from NW and SW (archive of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren At Jacob's Ladder, period photograph, unknown author, after 1971, repro photo M. Kracík, 2018); **C** – the south façade from the garden, current state with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor extension from 1999 (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 2.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1264, U Školské zahrady 1, ČCE Church At Jacob's Ladder. **A** – view into the front of the main hall; **B** – model of the original construction design by Ernest Gisel, 1967–1968; **C** – view into the meeting space with the organ and a partition (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 3.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1264, U Školské zahrady 1, ČCE Church At Jacob's Ladder. The north façade and the main entrance (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 4.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1264, U Školské zahrady 1, ČCE Church At Jacob's Ladder. Belfry at the NE corner of the congregation house (photo P. Veselý, 2007).

**Fig. 5.** Prague 5-Smíchov, No. 2482, Peroutkova 57, CASD Oratory. General view from the north onto the street façade with the main entrance (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 6.** Prague 5-Smíchov, No. 2482, Peroutkova 57, CASD Oratory. Project documentation (not final), Karel Štětina and co., July 1981. **A** – oratory groundplan with the main hall (CASD Archiv, repro photo M. Kracík, 2018); **B** – the north façade and the main entrance (Archiv CASD, plan B/4-4); **C** – the south façade facing the cemetery (Archiv CASD, plan B/4-6).

**Fig. 7.** Prague 5-Smíchov, No. 2482, Peroutkova 57, CASD Oratory. Entrance foyer (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 8.** Prague 5-Smíchov, No. 2482, Peroutkova 57, CASD Oratory. Interior, entrance hall, art composition by Václav Tříška and Blanka Adensamová. **A** – detail of a brilliant with inscription BIBLE SVATÁ (photo H. Křížová, 2018); **B** – general view of the artistic composition in the foyer (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 9.** Prague 5-Smíchov, No. 2482, Peroutkova 57, CASD Oratory. Interior, the main hall. General view from the gallery towards baptisterium. Adjacent cemetery is visible through the glazed wall on the left (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 10.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. General view from the NW with the main entrance (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 11.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. Architectural proposals. **A** – Jan Sokol, 1934 (copied from KOTALÍK 1994, 3); **B** – Jaroslav Cuhra, 1969; **C** – Václav Dvořák, 1970; **D** – a proposal from the Ambit file (Lenka Hornychová a Petr Chaloupek); **E** – Jaroslav Kosek and Daniela Fenclová; **F** – Petr Malinský, Richard Doležal, Peter Eisenlauer a Kateřina Postupová (B–F – Archive of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary); **G** – project documentation, section 5–5', Jindřich Synek and co. of the AMA atelier, May 1992 (Archive of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary, plan B-13; repro photo M. Kracík, 2017).

**Fig. 12.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary, interior. **A** – general view from the gallery towards the presbytery with the altar (mensa), pulpit and Immaculata; Stations of the Cross on the wall; crucifix hanging off the wooden ceiling; **B** – confluence of the stained glass above

the main entrance (photo M. Kracík 2018).

**Fig. 13.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. Interior, shrine (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 14.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. Interior, baptismal font (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 15.** Prague 10-Strašnice, No. 1000, Ke Strašnické 10, Church of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary, interior. **A** – NE corner, Josef Oberberger, 1967: stained glass of St. Wolfgang; **B** – SW corner, Jaroslava Fenzlová-Makovičková, 1994: stained glass of St. Agnes (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 16.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. General view from the north to the main façade with the entrance (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 17.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Original design of the newly built chapel. Period photograph, unknown author, 1937 (archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Kobylisy).

**Fig. 18.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Original sketch by arch. Václav Mašek from 1996 (private archive).

**Fig. 19.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Chimes with 14 bells (photo V. Mašek, 2015).

**Fig. 20.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, interior. **A** – view from the north towards the presbytery; **B** – view from the south onto the north addition with undulated glazed wall (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 21.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Interior, Seventh Station of the Cross by sculptor Bohumil Kafka from 1937 underlaid by recent wooden crosses (photo M. Kracík, 2018).

**Fig. 22.** Prague 8-Kobylisy, No. 1000, Kobyliské Square 1, Church of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Main hall during a holy mass (photo V. Mucha, 2014).

*Translation by Linda Foster*

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