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Streets on the Hillsides below Karlov in Prague and their Pavement Mosaic

ANNOTATION

The article deals with the valuable remains of the original early 20th century pavement mosaic in the area of the Albertov University Campus in Prague New Town. Special attention is paid to the streets, which are to be affected by utility lines renewal and revitalization projects of the area, i.e. Albertov Street with Albertov Stairs and Horská. Specific Prague mosaic paving is as important for the overall expression of the heritage scheduled area as the facade morphology of the local university institutes, and is undoubtedly a historical and architectural monument. Regretfully it is perceived as a mere firming of the street surface; stone setts of different sizes and colours are used when renewing the pavements, the original mosaic patterns are not observed. The original state is considered impossible to restore. The author declares that it is high time to change this attitude.

SUMMARY

History of Prague New Town between the hill with St. Apollinaris Church and the preserved New Town rampart is not formed only by churches, monasteries and university buildings, captured on the famous Prague vedute, plans and photographs, but also by street spaces with a partially preserved, more than a century-old mosaic of small pink and blue-grey setts in streets Albertov with Albertov Stairs, Horská, Studničkova, Hlavova etc.

Since the mid-19th century, the pavements in Prague have been paved with a mostly two-coloured mosaic, of not very regular chopped setts with an edge 4–6 cm long. Pink marble of Slivenec and black marble, mostly of Kosoř, were used as the material.

Today, the original pavement, as old and as impressive as the original facades of the surrounding houses, has been preserved only in a few streets in Prague. Unfortunately, the unique mosaic in Prague is not considered as anything other than firm street surface, something to step on. Prevailing view is that it is not possible to restore the specific Prague mosaic. Significantly different material and other production of setts and the technique of laying them are used in pavement renovations. The original softer colours and the traditional historical patterns and borders are not respected.

There is a danger that in the near future, the paving of Albertov streets may be irretrievably lost in areas, where the City district of Prague 2 is preparing the Revitalization of the Park near the rampart, which will affect the sloping section of Horská Street. In 2022 The Technical road authorities of the Prague City intend to commence reconstruction associated with the replacement of utility lines in the upper part of Albertov Street with the Albertov Stairs. That is why these streets and their documentation are given due attention in this article.

In 2010, the National Heritage Institute, a regional specialised office in Prague, submitted a proposal to proclaim seventeen historical mosaic pavements in Prague a cultural heritage monument, so far without success.

Facing the gradual inevitable disappearance of the original paving, which is not adequately replaced, it is high time to reflect with the owner of the pavements, the Capital City of Prague, individual city districts or the Czech Republic, on material, technical, construction, production and cultural and historical problems and find a way to remedy and protect this neglected part of our cultural heritage.

Fig. 1. Albertov University Campus, current built-up area and street grid. Map base: **A** – digital basic map of the Czech Republic, 2021 state, 1 : 10 000; **B** – orthophotomap of the Czech Republic (2021; © Czech Surveying and Cadastre Office, available on <<http://geoportal.cuzk.cz/geoprohlizec/>>).

Fig. 2. Philip van den Bossche / Johannes Wechter / Aegidius Sadeler, 1606: PRAGA. So-called Sadeler's Large Prospect of Prague. Cut-out with a view from the west of the undeveloped southern part of New Town (Karlov and Podskalí). Copperplate, etching, part 8. (scanned from reproduction Bossche/Wechter/Sadeler 1973). **At the bottom left**, the Church of Virgin Mary, St. Jerome and Slavic patrons in Emmaus, **bottom right** church of the Annunciation On the lawn. **At the top left** is St. Apollinaris church and above it the Church of the Assumption of

Virgin Mary and St. Charles the Great, still without the Baroque roof dome. **From the right**, the New Town rampart appears climbing up from the Botič valley, preserved to this day. Along the wall separating the vineyards and fields from the rocky terrain below the rampart, a careful look can notice the figures ascending to the Augustinian convent at Karlov.

Fig. 3. Folpertus van Ouden Allen / Conrad Decker, 1685: *PRAGA CAPVT REGNI BOHEMIAE. Sac.ae Caes.ae. Maiestati LEOPOLDO PRIMO Romanorum IMPERATORI [...]* Getruckt zu Wienn in Oesterreich bey Johan van Ghelen Universität Buchtruckern (Panorama of Prague and its surroundings from a bird's eye view from the hill above Smíchov). Copper engraving, etching, 100 × 210 cm (Moravian Library, sign. Moll-0001.679, available on <<https://mapy.mzk.cz/mzk03/001/036/676/2619267591/>>). Cut-out of the New Town in the area of today's Albertov. **At the bottom left** is the Emmaus Monastery, **at the bottom** centre is the church of the Annunciation On the lawn. **Up** in the centre is St. Apollinaris church, to the **left** of it the Augustinian convent at Karlov. From the church On the lawn, a road climbs up to the New Town rampart.

Fig. 4. Josef Jüttner, 1816: Plan der könig. *Hauptstadt PRAG trigonometrisch & topographisch aufgenommen von den Oberlieut.* Joseph Jüttner ... angefangen im Jahre 1811 und geendet 1816. Manuscript from the Kolovrat family archive in Oká in Rychnov nad Kněžnou (Roubík/Kuchař/Hlavsa 1972).

At the very top is the Church of St. Apollinaris. In the **centre left** by the Slupper Gasse, today Na Slupi Street, is the Monastery of St. Elizabeth Order and the former Servite Monastery with the Church of the Annunciation On the lawn. In the **centre right** there is the former Augustinian convent at Karlov; a road lined with trees leads to it from the southern end of the Slupper Gasse.

Fig. 5. The area of today's Albertov university campus on the original stable cadastre map from 1842 (© Central Archive of Surveying and Cadastre ČÚZK, Cadastral Funds, Prague 1-Old Town, tax district Prague, sign. B2/a/4C, inv. No. 5752; Available on: <https://uazk.cuzk.cz/vademecum_mapy/permalink?xid=8e1facc181e1421d87be4dbc26c1b317>).

Fig. 6. Alfred Hurtig. **A** – [1893, respectively 1892–1894]: Plan of Prague with surroundings. Print A. L. Koppe, Smíchov, 1 : 10 000, IV. edition (Municipal Library of Prague, sign. E 9273). Cut-out of the area below Karlov before the construction of the university campus; **B** – Royal Capital City of Prague and its surroundings in 1908. Print V. Neubert Graphic Art Institute in Smíchov, 1 : 10 000 (Municipal Library of Prague, sign. E 1401). Cut-out of the area below Karlov with 5 new university buildings and newly established streets Presslova and Albertov with Albertov Stairs.

Fig. 7. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. Remains of the original pavement mosaic pattern of "draughts in a frame" in front of the university building No. 2078/II (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 8. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street, Albertov Stairs. View from the fifth landing towards Na Slupi Street. Postcard from the period around 1925 (Prague City Museum, inv. No. H 182 979).

Fig. 9. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. Pavement between the lower Albertov Stairs and Studničkova Street (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 10. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. Remains of a border where the segment of the pavement turns to the Studničkova Street (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 11. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. The year 1906 in the pavement under the lower Albert Stairs (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 12. Prague 2-New Town, segment of the pavement connecting Albertov and Studničkova Streets, a park near the building of J. Hlava Institute of Pathology No. 2039/II. **A** – view to Studničkova Street; **B** – view to Albertov Street; **C** – "dragon in a frame with crosses" pattern in an unusual smaller format; **D** – sketch of the pavement mosaic in the incomplete current state (photo and drawing by the author, 2021).

Fig. 13. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. Albertov Stairs on a period photograph shortly after the construction (*sine* 1907, photo by K. Hipman).

Fig. 14. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street. **A** – the second and first landings of the lower Albertov Stairs; **B** – detail of the pavement mosaic on the second landing; **C** – the fourth, longer landing of the lower Albertov Stairs; **D** – south side of the fourth landing of the lower Albertov Stairs, on the right the base of one of the unpreserved railing bars, on the left a stone curb with the remains of vertical railing bars; **E** – street pavement space between the lower and upper Albertov Stairs; **F** – the landing of the upper Albertov Stairs with a view of the pavement between the lower and upper Albertov Stairs (photo A, B, D–F by the author, 2021; photo C, 2008).

Fig. 15. Prague 2-New Town, Albertov Street, view towards Na Slupi Street. The pavement between the upper and lower stairs, period photograph between 1912 and 1921 (unknown author, original dating around 1925, © Prague City Museum, inv. no. H 122 803).

Fig. 16. Prague 2- New Town, Horská Street. pavement in front of the main entrance to the building of the former German University Chemistry Institute No. 2040/II, completed in 1919 (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 17. Prague 2-New Town, Horská Street, sloping part. **A** – view uphill from the third section of the pavement; **B** – view downhill from the thirteenth section of the pavement between the white-painted wall enclosing the area below the rampart and the wall enclosing Ztracenka garden (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 18. Prague 2- New Town, Horská Street, sloping part. **A** – two step curbs made of Slivenec marble under the fifth section of the pavement. The step is paved with white marble setts; **B** – fourth section of the pavement, view from below; **C** – seventh section of the pavement, top view (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 19. Prague 2- New Town, Studničkova Street. **A** – pavement in front of the entrance to the side wing of J. Hlava Institute of Pathology No. 2039/II; **B** – detail of the original mosaic in front of the side wing of J. Hlava Institute; **C** – detail of new mosaic in front of the main wing of the Institute (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 20. Prague 2-New Town, Hlavova Street. Pavement mosaic with the "draughts" pattern in front of the entrance staircase to the Chemistry Institute of Charles University No. 2030/II (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 21. Prague 2-New Town, Hlavova Street. Pavement at the west side of the Purkyně Institute No. 2048/II (photo by the author, 2021).

Fig. 22. Prague 2-New Town, pavement connecting Albertov and Studničkova Streets. These two photographs from the survey of a particularly interesting pavement mosaic were added to the article by the editors. After removing the soil and weeds, the author of the article revealed (**A**) and documented (**B**) rarely applied pattern "dragon in a frame with crosses", here also in a reduced format (photo by J. Mourek, 2021).

Translation by Linda Foster