

PRAGUE / Main station

Unlike other European metropolises, railway stations in Prague emerged haphazardly, simply on the sites which had been acquired by railway companies. What is today Main Station, was established behind city walls, which later converted into park ring and, in the 1970s, was used for urban motorway. Leaving the station, one could hardly believe this is only about 5 mins' walk from Wenceslas Square; in the evening it is recommended rather to take underground. There is also a tram station named „Main Station“ but to reach it one must pass a park with banks occupied by snoozing homeless.

The Czech Republic committed to plan for high-speed train lines to connect in future Prague to Berlin, Munich and Vienna. European cities with high-speed connections experienced big investment boom immediately connected to the stations, with commercial services, offices and banking mushrooming around. The Main Station will apparently become the high-speed terminal for Prague.

The studio will attempt to create a vision for the transformation of the station as well as the surrounding space towards a metropolitan hub, attractive for citizens and visitors, with high concentration of services, jobs, cultural and leisure-time facilities, providing wide variety of public spaces, fully and comfortably connected to and integrated with urban space network.

CAMPUS DEJVICE

/ Victory square

The area of Victory Square / Vítězné náměstí in Dejvice is starting to change. While the newly opened Blanka tunnel increased the car load passing through the square, the recent extension of the underground Metro A line significantly decreased the number of buses there. Two large administrative buildings have grown at Evropská street, and the building of the Czech Institute of Informatics and Robotics at Jugoslávských Partyzánů street. The plans for the square completion seem to get closer to realization, particularly the corner site between Jugoslávských Partyzánů and Verdunská streets, where the controversial project called „Polar Bear“ has been proposed, and the development on the campus side of the square. The planned extension of the tram line from Podbaba to Suchdol, the planned train or tram connection of the airport and the diversion of traffic to the Blanka tunnel from the square will also have a major impact on the importance of the square, with diminishing its road traffic load.

In this flood of opportunities, we should not forget about the use and role of Vítězné náměstí in the urban tissue of Prague. Vítězné náměstí should become primarily a central public space of the prime district of Prague, the interface between education, research and innovation represented by the university campus, high quality housing, important state institutions, commerce and served by all modes of public transport, with immediate connection to Prague's international airport. The identity of Vítězné náměstí should refer to a unique concentration of three universities, which are the everyday destination of thousands of employees and students. And what should Vítězné náměstí not be? In particular, a spurred circular junction that prevents the interplay of activities with a high-quality public space. Students will be asked to materialize the positive vision of Vítězné náměstí as a gateway to the college campus.

CZECH REPUBLIC / Václav Havel airport

While the airport itself looks like a standard hub of global air transportation, there is a chaos behind the barbed-wired fence of the airport area. Leaving the airport in any direction shows lacking vision and spatial coordination of development. Big boxes of warehousing and logistics are scattered in the rural landscape around the airport. Huge concrete parking lots penetrate the farmland around scenic villages typical for the rural country of Central Bohemia. Shopping centre „Šestka“ in the middle of nowhere, with no shoppers. Office buildings (or hotels?) here and there, without linkage, order, logics.

The airport itself is lacking a capacity public transport service. Buses take passengers to a suburban underground station, a car will drive you to traffic jams and parking problems in inner city. For decades are running the disputes whether to build an underground, surface rail, tram or even high-speed. The airport management insists to build another runway, which will devastate the areas around the airport by noise – nobody knows how to resolve the conflict.

Let us together think about how to use the potential of the Airport, only 10 kms to the centre of Prague, close to another city of Kladno, how to improve access there. What can be the uses of the airport hub in the 21st century when flying has become common way of transportation for general public.



TO NEW TOWN

/ Milovice centre

Milovice is a small town 30km north-east from Prague. It has a military history reaching back to 1904, with Habsburg, Czechoslovak, Nazi and Soviet troops successively exercising in the adjacent training zone. Under Soviet occupation in the 1970s and 1980s it accommodated Soviet army with as much as 100 thousand soldiers staying there. The army base and exercise zone were abandoned in 1991 and since then the former army base is slowly turning into standard town. However, something important is still missing: a centre that would become a gateway to a new town.

Nowadays, a visitor arrives by train or car into a vacant space between the original Milovice settlement and the former military base, now "Mladá" housing estate. Here, a new town centre, linking both parts of the city, should be built and transforming the present housing estate into a standard town. This is the task for students.