

REVITALIZATION OF CHARLES SQUARE – FINAL EVALUATION

Evaluation criteria:

- A. *Solution of urbanistic relations*
- B. *Landscaping modifications and park design*
- C. *Architectonic solution and solution of public spaces*
- D. *Quality of adaptation / regeneration of listed objects*
- E. *Suitable concept of infrastructure - transport and rainwater management system*
- F. *Efficiency and economy of the solution*
- G. *Expediency in the choice of professional approach – proposed performance*

The overall average score is 1-7 points.

GustaftonPorter+Bowman + Šmídová LA

The Committee evaluated the proposal as a very comprehensible and harmoniously functioning unit that was convincing in its professionalism. The authors work well with Thomayer's historical heritage – they have understood the tradition and spirit in which the original park was created. The proposal fully respects Thomayer's system of paths and sidewalks and complements it with new, finer paths of a lower order. By thoughtfully restoring some of the lost parts of Thomayer's design, the authors have managed to solve the current problems of the park. This includes, for example, the solution of the northern section, which will enable the buildings of the New Town Hall and court to be re-integrated into Charles Square as a whole. In addition, the authors have renewed the entryways to the floral parterre in the central part of the western embankment, thus renewing the direct and barrier-free connection between the parterre and the street. Among the restored elements of Thomayer's design is the shape of the main entrance in the southern part of the western embankment. Despite interventions in the perimeter embankment, the authors have managed to preserve valuable trees. (A, B, D)

However, the authors have not stopped at merely reconstructing older elements of Thomayer's design – they have also incorporated a current, contemporary layer into the park. However, the new morphology is always created with clear reference to the style of Thomayer's Park – new paths that elegantly and harmoniously complement the older layout are inspired by an analogous contemporary solution. In addition, we also find newly created areas in the proposal: for example, the piazzetta in front of St. Ignatius Church and the university building near the subway. (A, B, D)

The proposal clearly assigns a function and programme to each place in the park. The large universal meadow area was one of the valuable elements of the original park layout. However, the park, which is divided into individual units with clearly assigned functions, may prove to be less sustainable over time as the use of the park changes. The proposal can be characterised as classic, faithfully consistent with the tradition of urban parks and the best practices of landscaping; this has a clear positive side, but compared to other proposals, it also becomes evident that it at the same time, it steers clear of a more daring contemporary interpretation. This fact is most prominent in the case of the maintenance-intensive central floral parterre, which raises the question of a deeper purpose of such a historicising composition. (B, D, F)

The authors unify the aesthetics of the park using the motif of a water element, which connects the past and present, creating new possibilities of use at the same time. The sculptural detail of the

fountains is costly, yet of a high artistic standard; it also enables their interactive use, especially for children's games. However, placing a playground in front of Roezl's Memorial seems inappropriate. The same applies to the preservation of the café in its current location on the corner of Žitná Street, in terms of both sunshine and location along the main traffic route. (C, D)

From a landscaping perspective, the Committee appreciated the theme of the amphitheatre, which uses the natural topography of the square. The use of a bench with a high back is a convincing solution to the problem of protecting the western and southern perimeter embankments. The proposal emphasises the feeling of safety, i.e. the ability to see under greenery, ensuring the overall transparency of the park. The proposal is sophisticated and convincing in terms of plant use and their aesthetic effect. (B)

. A problematic part of the proposal is that part of the eastern street between Ječná and Žitná, including the newly proposed kiosks and avenues, cannot be solved within the framework of Horizon 2025. The team's proposal includes the attractive idea of stackers in underground garages; however, their assessment was not clearly positive. Although this is a financially cost-effective solution, it reinforces the current sense of isolation, marginality and difficult use of the part of the square along the Jesuit College for rest and relaxation. Although parking places will disappear from the area, garage lifts will create a new barrier that occupies nearly a third of the intersection between the park and the eastern street. The authors have met the requirement of barrier-free access and better accessibility of the park. Aside from traffic issues, the authors have not addressed the wider neighbourhood of Charles Square. (A, E, F)

In terms of efficiency and economy of the solution, the Committee believes that, of all the proposals presented, this one requires the most intensive care and maintenance (e.g. a demanding floral parterre). As the authors themselves declare, the idea of using lawns for various events entails the need for good event management, including contractual provisions ensuring that the area will be restored to its original condition. The creative team showed a very good ability to use competitive dialogue during the process. (F, G)

The overall score is 5.49 points.