



MACHOŇ ARCADE IN PARDUBICE

MACHOŇOVA PASÁŽ, TŘÍDA MÍRU NO. 60,
530 06 PARDUBICE

INVESTOR: METROSTAV A.S.

CONTRACTOR: GEMA ART GROUP A.S.

IMPLEMENTATION: 2011–2013



The architecturally valuable Art Deco (a style popular at the time) shopping arcade designed by Ladislav Machoň was built in the eastern Bohemian city of Pardubice in the mid-1920s. The building with a long arcade passage leading from the busy Třída Míru street to the Karlovice housing estate was built in the place of older structures dating back to the 16th century. Originally, the space was occupied by a prayer house owned by the Unity of the Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), dissolved by the order of King Ferdinand I in 1548. The house then served as home for Pardubice citizens before being put to torch during the Thirty Years War.

The plot of land was bought by Antonín Kratochvíl and František Veselý in 1917. After careful deliberation, the two decided to build a grandiose new structure: a five-storey building including a passage arcade with shops. The construction project was designed by Ladislav Machoň. As a prominent Czechoslovak architect, he became renowned particularly for his Art Deco and functionalist buildings. The construction took place from 1923 to 1925. It included 28 shops and 31 flats on the upper floors. The front facade was decorated with four statues by Karel Dvořák depicting a fisherman, weaver, joiner and dyer respectively. The head of the arcade also contains an interesting wall painting by Alexandr Vladimír Hrstka (Hrška - trans.).

The opening ceremony took place in March 1925. At the time, the building was among the most modern shopping centres in the interbellum Czechoslovakia. The local Hoffman Café counted among the most famous establishment of the era. The Machoň Arcade has served its purpose up to the present day. Although the building was declared a cultural monument in 1958, its condition continued to deteriorate. A general overhaul was debated as early as 1995.

A complete renovation of the building was launched in January 2011. The renovation plans were prepared by the architect Miroslav Petrů. GEMA ART GROUP a.s. participated in the project as the main supplier of restoration work.

Construction was completed in November 2012. After renovation, 17 shops, a restaurant and an information centre were opened in the arcade; another 4 larger premises are used as office space. Flats on the upper floors of the building were preserved. The construction project included the construction of new underground garages and parking spaces near the building.



Overall view of the interior of the arcade – condition before renovation



Overall view of the interior of the arcade – condition after renovation



Rear parts of the arcade – condition before renovation



Rear parts of the arcade – condition after renovation



Lunette – condition after restoration



Close up of the rear part of the arcade after renovation



The Machoň Arcade – condition after renovation



Replicas of a historical light



Memorial plaque



Close-up of a statue on the façade of the Machoň Arcade



Close-up of a statue on the façade of the Machoň Arcade



Overall view of the arcade exterior



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RESTORATION OF MOSAIC FLOORS

The arcade's unique look is emphasised by the mosaic floors made of little cubes of three different colours and various sizes. White, yellow and red cubes are put together to create rectangular shapes.

The mosaic floor had suffered considerable damage and was repaired several times in the past, often with unsuitable materials: ceramic tiles, concrete and even pieces of bricks. Considering the degree of damage to the mosaic, it had to be completely replaced.

The restoration of the original mosaic floor was carried out with attention to the smallest details and on the basis of accurate measurements of the original shapes and patterns.





Mosaic floor – condition after restoration



Mosaic floor – condition after restoration



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RESTORATION OF THE STONE ELEMENTS IN THE ARCADE

Restoration of the granite socles lining the mosaic floor of the arcade was also a part of the project. At the entrances to the individual shops, the socle forms thresholds made of artificial stone. Artificial stone was showing the largest degree of degradation in the form of cracks and heavy pollution.

The surface was first steam-cleaned; in the most polluted areas, mechanical and chemical cleaning was used. Sealants were injected in the cracks and the missing parts were re-moulded. The re-moulded parts further needed to be patinated. The experts replaced the missing granite parts of the socle with suitable replicas visually adjusted to fit with the surroundings.





Granite socles – condition after restoration



Granite socles – condition after restoration



Mosaic floor – condition after restoration



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RESTORATION OF THE WOODEN ELEMENTS

Experts from GEMA ART GROUP a.s. also participated in restoring the original appearance of the wooden elements. The wooden parts of the shop windows underscored the atmosphere of interbellum Czechoslovakia; however, it was destroyed over time and replaced with inappropriate replicas.

During restoration works, suitable wooden replicas of the original shop window frames were made to match the two preserved originals.

Wooden staircase handrails were also restored. The surface was heavily polluted and painted black. The whole railing had to be dismantled, treated in a workshop and subsequently put back into its original place.





Replicas of interbellum Czechoslovak wooden shop window frames



Café restored to its 1920s appearance



Rear part of the Machoň Arcade



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RESTORATION OF METAL ELEMENTS

Locksmithing works and restoration of metal elements involved in particular the metal parts of the shop windows including the steel frames of the shop windows, collapsible gates, brass bars of the entrance door, the original display case locks and steel fanlight with vent windows.

In a number of cases, these metal elements were not preserved, therefore replicas had to be made based on the surviving remnants of the originals.

A number of original steel doors and shop window frames were carefully restored on the basis of the performed restoration survey. After cleaning by sand blasting and the use of sodium hydroxide, the surface had to be degreased with a special anti-oxidation solution prepared according to old recipes. The surface was then passivated and coated. The works involved the installation of stained-glass windows.



Collapsible gates



Close-up of a metal handle



Arcade window with a metal bar – condition after restoration



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RESTORATION OF STUCCO DECORATIONS AND EXTERIOR SURFACES

The works encompassed restoration of all stucco decorations and walls inside the Machoň Arcade. Restoration surveys showed that, for years, the original stuccos were preserved under comparatively newer layers of coating. After the removal of these unsuitable coatings, the restoration itself could begin. Broken up parts were stabilised by injecting fortifying substances into the material. Where the damage was too serious, the profiles were replaced with replicas. Scratches and minor damage were expertly retouched. The surface was subsequently sanded to achieve the desired smoothness. The colouring was set to correspond to the original 1920s appearance.





Condition before restoration



Restored lunette



Close-up of the wall - conservation of an original inscription



Overall view of the granite socles



Overall view of the interior of the arcade